

THE
TRAGEDY

OF

JULIA AGRIPPINA;
Empresse of Rome.

First Edition.

By T. May



LONDON,

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*Collate
&
Perfected
J.H.*



The Speakers.

Claudius Cæsar.

Nero Cæsar.

Britannicus.

Seneca.

Burrhus.

Vitellius.

Pollio.

Crispinus.

Geta.

Otho.

Montanus.

Petronius.

Pallas.

Narcissus.

Anicetus.

Agrippina.

Octavia.

Poppæa.

Fulvia.

Acte.

Locusta.

L.

ACTED 1628.

A 3

OCTO-

The Speaker

OCTOB. 26. 1638.

Imprimatur,

MATTH. CLAY.

MEGARA ascends.

Megara.

ME Hus to the Romane Palace, as our home
And proper mansion, is Megara come
No stranger to these walls: nor more in Hell
Then here, doe mischiefs, and we Fairies dwell
Let the unenvy'd Gods henceforth possesse
Poore Peasants hearts, and rule in Cottages;
Let Vertue lurke among the rurall Swaines,
whilest Vice in Romes Imperiall Palace reignes,
And rules those breasts, whom all the world obeys.
what though the Gods and Vertue first did raise
Rome to that height it holds? they did but make
An Empire large enough for us to raise,
And build a strength for us to manage now;
Though Vertue made the Romane greatness grow:
Shee now forsakes it at the height: the Powers,
And fruits of all her diligence are ours.
But to preserve that interest, and keep high
Our hold in this commanding family,
A blacker Fury then my selfe must rise,
To fill these rooves with fresh Impieties.
Rise truell Ghost, ascend Caligula,
That lastly didst the worlds proud scepter sway
Beyond our wish; who though an Emperour,
In wickednesse wer't greater then in power;
And cloth'd with flesh among mankind didst dwell
A Fiend more black then any was in Hell.

AGRIPPINA.

From those darke vaults ascend; to blast this faire
 And gorgeous Palace, like that poisonous aire,
 Which Earth-quakes from the grounds torne entrails breacht
 To fill the world with pestilence and death.
 Hee comes; Hee comes: the very house begins
 To shake with horror of approaching sinnes.
 The night growes blacker than before, and I
 My selfe am fill'd with new Impiety.

CALIGULA'S Ghost.

Why am I raised from the vaults below?
 What mischief can an aery shadow doe?
 What can a naked Ghost performe? In vain
 Are all intents, unlesse I reign'd againe
 Obey'd by all the Romans power, and more
 That wicked body which I had before.
 What then I did you know, and if your power
 Could hve maintain'd me longer Emperour,
 I had outdone your wishes, and given birth
 To such new mischiefs, as the suffering earth
 Had groan'd to feele: what my intentions were
 Did to the world in those black booke appeare,
 When all Romes Senate were to death design'd,
 And chests of poison that I left behind,
 Which since my death into the Ocean throwne,
 Poison'd the waves for many leagues, and on
 Poore fishes wrought that execution,
 Which on mankind I ment they should have done.
 What can I now performe alas?

MELERA. Enough.

With thy contagious presence blast this rooffe;
 Infect th' Imperiall House with all the ill
 That Hell and thou canst bring. Let mischiefe still
 Reigne here, and keep out banish'd Piety,
 Justice, and Conscience; let no sacred ty
 Of Nature, or Religious lawes restrain
 Their Parricidall hands: all names be vaine

AGRIPPINA.

Of brother, child, or parent. let the wife
With impious rage destroy her husband's life,
The brother kill the brother, and the Sonne
Rip up his parent's bowels.

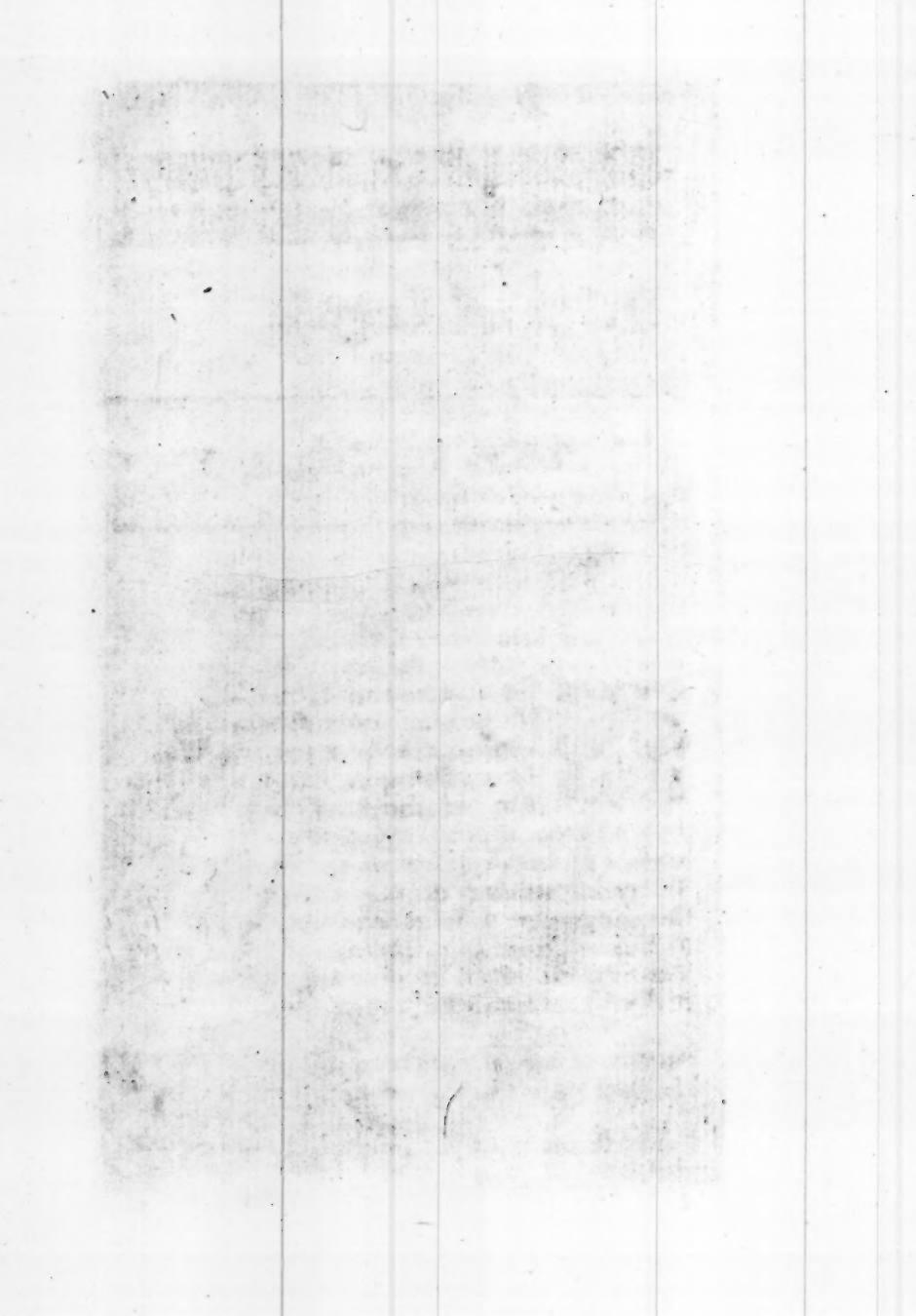
GHOST.

'Twill be done.
The actors are my kindred, and like mine
Must play their parts: ambitious Agrippine,
Pursue thy cruell projects, and upon
A husband's murther raise thy Impious Sonne,
That he may play the Parricide againe,
And murder thee, that gav'st him life and reigne.
That all the world astonish'd at so high
Ingratitude and foule Impiety,
May feare the Monsters reigne, yet suffer more
Then they could feare, or ere was felt before.
Let what no foes, no furies durst conspire
To act 'gainst Rome, nor I my selfe desire
When I was Prince; bee cursed Nero's crimes.
Let his dire story in succeeding times
From all earths Tyrants else the wonder draw,
And men almost forget Caligula.

MEGERA.

The Fates consent; that thunder, which wee heare
From Acheron, confirms the Omen there.
Downe wicked Ghost into thy cell below,
Wee must no longer bide; the Cocks doe crow,
The twinkling starres begin to hide their beards
The day would dawne, and from Auroræ bed
Would Titan rise, but that he feares to see
Such instruments of Hell's impiety.
The Gods themselves forbid our longer stay,
For feare our presence should retard the day.

Exeunt.



A Tragedy.

ACT. I. SCEN. I.

PALLAS, VITELLINS,
POLLIO.

Pallas.

NOW is the time noble *Vitellius*,
For you, and you most honour'd *Pollio*,
To make that service you have done com-
To royall *Agrippina*, briefly thus: (pleas
The two commanders o'th' *Pratorian*
Crispinus Rufus, and that *Lucius Geta*. (campe
Must be displac'd, and some of neerer trust
To her designs advanced in their roome,
Or else our power will nere be full, they love
Britannicus too well, this is the thing
The Empresse withes; let your eloquence
And wisdom further it in *Cesar's* care.

Vitelli.

Feare us not *Pallas*; but what successors
Have we to take their charge?

Pallas.

One must take all.

Yes

AGRIPPINA.

You may pretend the inconvenience
Of two commanders, and so take from *Cæsar*
All jealousie of the plot.

Pollio.

Who shall it be?

Pallas.

Burrhus Afranius a wise valiant man,
Belov'd and honour'd by the souldiers.
None can except against him, and the change
Will not displease the campe: nor can his merit
Make him lesse thankfull to her, knowing well,
Twas in her power to make it otherwise.
But the advancing of such able men
As *Seneca* and *Burrhus* will take off
All envy from the Empreſſe and our selves.
Then wee with praise have wrought our purposes,
And made our party strong, while *Seneca*
Shall sway the Senate, *Burrhus* rule the campe
To her designs: but I'le presume no farther
T' instruct your wisdomes, or much lesse to doubt
Your true affections to the state and honour
Of *Agrippina*, who will then have power
To make more large requitall to her friends,
In which most high and happy ranke, you two
Are chiefly seared: shee acknowledges
Her selfe indebted to your eloquence
Noble *Vitellius*, who in Senate lately
You prov'd her marriage lawfull, and being Censor,
Depos'd *Silanus* from his Pratorship,
Who should have married young *Octavia*:
To you, brave *Pollio*, whose perswasions
Have beene the cause young *Nero* now enjoyes
That happy marriage, which *Silanus* lost.
But most of all shee ow'd to both your paines
In causing *Cæsar* to adopt her *Nero*.

Vitellius.

AGRIPPINA.

Vitellius.
 'Twas hard to worke at first. *Cæsar* stuck at it,
 Alledging that the *Claudian* family
 Never adopted any, and besides
 When *Lucius Geta* and *Crispinus Rufus*
 In love they bore to young *Britannicus*
 Told him that that adoption to the world
 Would bee ridiculous: by president
 Wee did refuse it, shewing how *Tiberius*
 Having a Sonne and Nephew both alive,
 Adopted th' issue of *Germanicus*.

Pallas.
 My Lords, 'twas nobly carryed; this designe
 That now wee have in hand; though not so hard
 To worke, will prove as advantageous,
 Bee you with *Cæsar*; I'll goe farisfie
 The Emperresse of your loves.

Vitellius. Pollio.
 Farewell brave *Pallas*.

Exeunt Vitell. & Pol.

Pallas.
 Farewell my Lords. Goe flattering Senatours,
 Goe use your best perswasive eloquence,
 Whilest I alone upon your envie rise,
 Whilest I enjoy in *Agrippinaes* love
 The fruit of your obsequious diligence.
 What though my birth be humble, and my stile
 But one of *Cæsar's* freed-men, though I boast not
 Patritian blood, nor in my galleries
 Display old ranks of note-lesse anceffours,
 Or eare-cropt images, if I enjoy
 What ever high Nobility can give
 Respect and power: the stare can witness it.
 The Senate feare mee, and in flattery
 Have su'd to *Cæsar* to conferre on mee
 Prætorian and Quæstorian ornaments.
 Which I at last vouchsafed to accept.

Who

AGRIPPINA.

When my command alone has doom'd to death
The noblest of that order; men whose names
Old *Rome* has boasted of, whose virtues rais'd
Her to that envi'd height that now she holds.
Their murders stupid *Cesar* rather chose
To take upon himselfe, then question mee.
Let dull Patricians boast their aery titles,
And count me base, whilest I commend their lives,
And for the furtherance of my high intents,
Make noblest men my hated instruments.

Enter NARCISSEUS.

But ha! *Narcissus*? yes; there comes a man
That was my rivall once, whom I fear'd more
Then all the Lords of *Rome*, my fellow free'd man,
That knew our wayes of power; that not the Senate,
But *Cesar's* chamber did command the world,
And rule the fate of men: but Fortune's turn'd,
And he not worth my regard or feare.
In mastering him I feele my greatest strength

Narcissus.

Not looke upon mee? am I fall'n so low?
Did I in equall place with this proud man,
Nay farre above him, sway the state, and rule
Great *Cesar's* heart, while *Messallina* liv'd,
And was not there content (Oh punishment
Of my ambitious aimes) but caus'd the death
Of that loose Emperesse to bring in th' expulst
Helia Petrina, and instead of her
Have let this Tygresse *Agrippina* in
This dragon spirit to devour us all
Except proud *Pallas* her adulterer?
What unavoyded dangers every way
Threaten this life? For if young *Nero* reigne,
I dye, that sought to crosse his mothers match:
If *Britannicus* do reigne, I dye
That caus'd his mothers death. What shall I doo?

Where

AGRIPPINA.

Where shall I leane for safety? better trust
The innocent goodnesse of *Britannicus*
Then *Agrippinaes* force and cruell nature;
Nor can I hope more goodnesse from her sonne.
That may give longer respite to my feare.
Besides it beares the greater shew of iustice,
And honest service to my Royall Master.
Since wee must fall, it is some happinesse
To fall the honest way, if wee may call
That honesty at all, or reall vertue
To which necessity enforces us.
And wee by fortune not election practise.

Enter *GETA*, *CRISPINUS*.

Here comes two friends of young *Britannicus*;
Haile *Lucius Geta*, haile *Crispinus Rufus*.

Geta. *Narcissus* haile.

Narcissus,

Brave *Romans* your are come
Fitty to ease my overburden'd breast
Of weighty thoughts, which I dare freely trust
Vnto your noble cares.

Geta.

You may *Narcissus*
Trust truth with us.

Crispinus.

Or any honest secret.

Geta.

What is it you would with us?

Narcissus!

You know my Lords,
(And I must needs confesse) I was a meanes
Of *Messalinaes* death; but all the Gods
Can witnesse with mee how unwillingly
I lent a hand to that sad action;
And but for *Cesar's* safety, which I prize
Above my life and fortunes, and which then

I thought

AGRIPPINA.

I thought endanger'd much by her holdfast,
Nought in the world could ere have moov'd mee to it.

Crispinus.

What hence would you inferre?

Narcissus.

Then Know my Lords,
How little I respect my private ends
To doethe publike service, and can loose
My selfe for *Cæsars* good: it may be thought
When the most hopefull Prince *Britannicus*
Shall weare that wreath which all the world adores,
To me it may be fatall, as a foe
Vnto his mother: but I rather wish
My selfe for ever lost, then that brave Prince
Should not succeed his father.

Geta.

How! succeed?

What feare is there of that?

Crispinus.

What power on earth,
Can barre his right, whilst wee command the campe?
I'de rather see (which all the Gods avert)
Rome rent againe with civill broiles, then hee
Should loose unjustly the Imperiall throne.

Narcissus.

Y^e are true and Noble friends; and here I vow
To joyne with you, and use my uttermost power
T^o advance the honour of *Britannicus*.

Crispinus.

What danger threatens it?

Narcissus.

Do you not know
To whom the Sonne of *Agrippina*'s married?
Crispinus. Yes.

Narcissus.

And that honor were enough for him.

Without

AGRIPPINA.

Without adoption too, were his aimes private,
And that his crafty Mother did not cast
A way for him to the succession.

Crispinus.

'Twas strangely done of *Cæsar* I confesse.

Narcissus.

They make the faction strong, and cunningly
Encrease the traine of *Nero*, and displace
The faithfull servants of *Britannicus*.

Wife *Seneca*'s recall'd from banishment
By *Agrippinae*s meanes, not for the love
Shee beares his vertue; but to make him hers,
That *Seneca*'s authority may gaine
The peoples love to her ambitious sonne,
Of whose young yeares heetakes tuition.

Crispinus. I think no lesse.

Geta. Besides to make the match.

For her young *Nero* with *Octavia*.
Noble *Silanus* dy'd, who might have prov'd
A faithfull propto *Claudius* family.

Narcissus.

In blood that fatall marriage was begun,
I feare the Omen; *Agrippina*'s feirce
And cruell nature has too much been seene
In this short time. *Lollia Paulina*, Neece
To *Cotta Messalinus*, and late wife
To *Caius Cæsar*, for no other cause
Then aiming once at *Claudius* marriage
Is banish'd *Italy*; her goods are seiz'd,
And but five millions of Sesterces left her
Of all her great estate; but there the malice
Of this fell woman staves not: now wee heare
A *Tribune* is dispatch'd away, to kill
The banish'd Lady, and bring back her head.

Crispinus.

Oh barbarous cruelty!

Narcissus.

AGRIPPINA.

Narcissus.

Yet more I feare,
Since her *Domitius* is adopted now.
I feare thee 'll shortly aime at higher blood.

Geta.

Wee 'll guard the life of young *Britannicus*.

Narcissus.

And I 'll be vigilant for *Cæsar*'s safety.
When all her ends are wrought, his death is next.

Enter *BRITANNICUS*.

Geta.

Here comes the youthfull hope of *Rome* and us.

Britannicus.

Tell mee, my friends, am not I *Cæsar*'s sonne?

Crispinus.

My Lord, who dares to question it?

Britannicus.

I'm sure,
I was his eldest sonne, and whilest I liv'd
I thought that *Cæsar* had not lack'd an heire
But I at last have found an elder brother,
Domitius is adopted *Cæsar*'s sonne
His name is *Nero* now. I cannot tell
What is my fault.

Geta.

Excellent youth, how much
Beyond his yeeres hee apprehends his wrongs?

Crispinus.

Feare not sweet Prince, though *Agrippina*'s sonne
Bee two yeere elder then your selfe, the Senate
Will never judge that an adopted Sonne
Shall in succession bee prefer'd before
The true and naturall heire.

Britannicus.

You ever lov'd mee,
Pray doe so still.

Geta.

AGRIPPINA.

AGRIPPINA

Geta

While we have breath, my Lord,
you shall command our lives.

Crispinus

How unawares
Has feeble *Cæsar* wrought a snare to catch
His own unhappy life in: grow sweet prince,
Grow up to strengthen the Imperiall house,
And Curber the furious makes off thy foes.

Enter NERO, PALLAS.

Nero

Brother *Britannicus* haile.

Britannicus.

Haile to you:

Domitius Anobarbus.

Nero

Doe you scorne

My salutation, or not know my name?

Britannicus.

That was your fathers name; and why not yours?

Nero

How 's that? Proud boy.

Exeunt Brit. & reliq.

Pallas.

Well, let them goe, my Lord.

'Twas not the braine of young *Britannicus*

That could give birth to this minurious scorne,

Though for his yeeres, the boy be capable.

But riper heads then his: there went his counsell

Crispinus Rufus, and that *Lucius Geta*,

Who swell the youth with boasting hopes, and thinke

Their power can give protection to his pride.

I'le make them see their errour, and perceive,

One breath of mine can blow them from their strength.

This newes I'll beare to *Agrippina* straight.

Come Prince; *Britannicus* shall find anon

What feeble props his pride has lean'd upon.

Exeunt.

AGR

AGRIPPINA.

AGRIPPINA, SENECA, VITELLIUS,
POLLIO.

Agrippina.

You are my Judges.

Seneca.

Your poore servants, Madam.

Agrippina.

Nay that must be your office; you have read

My Commentaries over, and I looke for

A faithfull censure: I am sure, my Lords,

You have both learning able to discern,

And such integritie as will not flatter.

Speake *Seneca*; I see they looke on you:

How doe you like them?

Seneca. Royall *Agrippina*,

Such, and so good they bee, that ablest men

May boldly speake, and not offend the truth,

Nor you at all; the stile is full and Princely.

Vitellius.

Stately and absolute, beyond what ere

These eyes have scene; and *Rome*, whose majestie

Is there describ'd, in after times shall owe

For her memoriall to your learned pen,

More then to all those fading monuments

Built with the riches of the spoiled world.

When rust shall eat her brasie, when times strong hand

Shall bruise to dust her marble Palaces,

Triumphall Arches, Pillars, Obeliskes,

When *Julius* Temple, *Claudius* Aquaducts,

Agrippa's Baths, and *Pompey's* Theater,

May *Rome* it selfe shall not be found at all,

Historians books shall live; those strong records,

Those deathlesse monuments alone shall shew

What, and how great the *Roman* Empire was.

Pollio.

The act is Noble; not the present world

Alone

AGRIPPINA.

Alone shall owe to *Agrippinas* worth
(As for her gracious government it does)
But future ages shall acknowledge more
To the rich labours of her Royall pen.

Agrippina.

The wisest Princes never sought to raise
Their present state alone, but to preserve
Themselves immortall by an endlesse fame.
For memory of mee, besides these bookes,
If that our Augures faile not in their skill,
Or flatter not, that *German* Colony,
Which I of late deducted o're the *Rhine*
To *Whium*, for evermore the name
Of *Agrippinaes* Colony shall beare.

Vitellius.

That act, though great, declares your power alone, how
Your wealth and greatnesse : but these learned bookes
Expresse your wisdom, and for these you owe
Nothing at all to Fortune.

Agrippina.

Thus I meane
To spend all time which from affaires of state,
And businesse of our Empire can be spar'd.

Seneca.

Is she already turn'd our Emperour ?

Agrippina.

Those wretches have too narrow soules, who thinke
That persons great and eminent in state
Can spare no time to purchase fame by writing,
But what they steale from action and imployment,
As if no mind were large enough for both.
Who was more full of action, and more fit
To rule, nay rule the world, then *Julius Caesar* ?
Yet he was of my mind.

Seneca.

Oh strange male spirit !
Can there be found no other parallell

AGRIPPINA.

But *Julius Caesar* to a womans minde ?

Agrippina.

Yet *Julius* was too blame, hee toild too much
To get his honour, and too much debarr'd
His nature the free use of Princely pleasures.
Sure *Lucius Sylla* had an ample minde;
Tis *Syllas* Character, that *Salust* gives him,
A free and great enjoyer of his pleasures,
Yet how industrious his actions speake,
Hee found fit time to rule the *Romane* world,
And write both Greeke and Latine Commentaries.

Seneca.

The foules of *Sylla* and of *Cesar* both
I thinke have enter'd her.

Agrippina.

Well worthy friends,
You doe approve my way of writing then.

Seneca.

Yes gracious Madam; and because you nam'd
Great *Julius* to us, I was thinking now
That as in blood, so in your stiles of writing
There was some neerekenesse.

Agrippina.

Seneca, I thanke you;
But I confesse your positive approbation
Pleas'd mee as well as that comparison.

Seneca.

Does not your Majestie esteeme his booke ?

Agrippina.

Indifferent well; a good loose carelesse way.
I thinke directly with *Asinius Pollio*,
Had *Cesar* liv'd, hee would have mended it;
The man had farre more in him then that shewes.

Seneca.

Yet under favour, Madam, some have thought
Those Commentaries hardly could be mended,

Act ile

A G R I P P I N A.

A stile so strong, naked, and beautifull,
Free from affected words, and from all glosse
Or dresse of Oratory, as in stead
Of leading others in a way to write,
It quite discourages the ablest men.
So *Hirtius* thought, and that sam'd *Cicero*,
The greatest master of *Romes* eloquence.

Agrippina.

Are those your authors then? that *Hirtius*
Was *Cesars* servant partiall in his heart,
Or else hee flatter'd him; for *Cicero*,
They were so farre out of his tedious straine,
Hee could not censure them.

Seneca.

Yet able men
Can truly censure of another stile
Then what themselves have us'd.

Agrippina.

Hee was not able,
No, not in Oratory; had I rul'd
Rome and her Senate then, as now I doe,
Not all th' Orations that e're *Cicero*
Made in the Senate, should have sav'd one haire
Of an offendour, or condemn'd a Mouse.

Vitellius.

How confident shee is in censuring!

Seneca.

I am amaz'd: but let her have her way.
Forgive my silence noble *Cicero*;
Here thy defence is vaine; but what I spare,
The tongues of all posterity shall speake.

Enter PALLAS, Tribune.

Pallas.

The Tribune, Madam, is return'd and brings
Lollia Paulinaes head.

AGRIPPINA.

Let him come in.

Agrippina.

Tribuns.

Your pleasure, great *Augusta*, is perform'd.

Agrippina.

Let me peruse this face: ha! 'tis much chang'd.

Her teeth shall make me sure, they did not grow. *Dio.*

The common way; I am confirm'd; 'tis shee.

Reward him *Pallas*.

Tribuns.

The Gods preserve

Augusta Agrippina.

Agrippina.

O pale death,

Thou mock of beauty, and of greatnesse too:

Was this the face, that once in *Cesar*'s love

Was *Agrippinae*s rivall, and durst hope

As much 'gainst mee, as my unquestion'd power

Has wrought on her? Was this that beautie, once

That wore the riches of the world about it?

For whose attire, all lands, all seas were search'd,

All creatures rob'd? This! This was that *Paulina*,

Whom *Cajus Caesar* serv'd, whom *Rome* ador'd

And the world feared.

Seneca.

Such a sight mee 'thinks

Should make her sadly thinke of humane frailty.

Agrippina.

Take hence the head, least in her death shee gaine

A greater conquest o're mee, then her life

Could ever doe, to make me shed a teare.

I would not wrong the justice I have done.

So much as to lament it now: You know

My friends, shee had a spirit dangerous.

And though my nature could have pardon'd her,

Reason of state forbade it, which then told mee

Great

AGRIPPINA.

Great ruines have been wrought by foolish pity.

Seneca.

Would thee had such a nature; but 'tis now
Too late to give her counsell.

Pallas.

So let all

That dare contest with *Agrippina*, fall. *Enter servant.*

Servant.

Cesar is come to visite you.

Agrippina.

Now friends,

Vitellius, *Pollio*, *Pallas* second mee.

Enter CÆSAR, ANTI-STIUS.

Cesar.

How fares my *Agrippina*?

Agrippina.

Wondrous well,

When I am blest with *Cesar's* company.

Cesar.

That shall be oft, my love, when *Rome's* affaires,
And publike businesse will give me leave.

Agrippina.

I would partake my selfe of those affaires,
Rather then want your presence.

Pallas.

I beleeve it.

Cesar.

Thou shalt; 'tis onely for thy dearest sake
I love my fortunes, thy sweet fellowship
Makes light the burthen of my government.

Agrippina.

To ease great *Cesar's* care, shall ever bee
The height of my desires: before you came
My heart was sad: I sent for these my friends
T' impart the reason to them.

AGRIPPINA.

Cesar.
Sad; for what?

Agrippina.
Weighing the troubles of a Princely state,
And all the dangers that still threaten it.

Cesar.
Dangers!

Pallas.
Shee strikes upon the fittest string;
No passion reignes in him so much as feare.

Agrippina.
Wee were devising of the fittest meanes
To give your state security: you know
Your strongest guard is the Prætorian campe.

Cesar.
Most true.

Agrippina.
That campe commanded now by two,
May be by Captaines too ambitious strife
Divided into factions, and so made
Lesse serviceable, should your safety need them.

Vitellius.
Cesar remembers when that bold attempt
Of *Silius* was, how the Prætorian campe
Was by their generall strife in mutiny,
And had not one been chosen for that day
To rule them all, *Cesar* had not been safe.

Pollio.
Wise men in calmes provide for stormes to come.
None knowes how dangerous the times may prove,
Though now the state be safe, and may the Gods
To *Cesar's* honor long preserve it so.

Seneca.
What new designe is this, that all of them
Second so readily, and I was not
acquainted with it? If't prove mischievous,

aside.
I thanke

AGRIPPINA.

I thanke the Empreffe for my ignorance.

Agrippina.

Burrhus Afranius is a worthy man,
Fit for the place, and faithfull, well-belov'd
By all the souldiers: such a change, my Lord,
None can except against: Let him take all.

Seneca.

What ere her ends may bee, this proposition
For noble *Burrhus* sake, I must approve.

Cesar.

'Tis true, my love, I make no question
Of *Burrhus* worth, and fitnesse for the place:
But what offence have *Geta* and *Crispinus*
Been e're accus'd of? Or what just suspicions
Are there of them?

Agrippina.

I will not be unjust,
To accuse guiltlesse men, although I prize
Thy safety, *Cesar*, equall to my life.
I know no crimes of note they have committed.

Vitellius.

Cesar, it is no losse to them at all;
They both have plentious fortunes to retire to.

Pollio.

And in so neere a cause, who dares examine
Great *Cesar*'s counsells, or enquire the reason?

Agrippina.

Shall *Burrhus* have it *Cesar*? speake thy pleasure.
Or if my care offend, I shall hereafter
Forbeare to meddle.

Cesar.

No, sweet *Agrippina*;
Since thou wilt have it so; goe *Pallas*, draw
The warrant straight, and seale it in our name:
Let *Geta* and *Crispinus* be remoov'd,
And *Burrhus* take possession presently.

AGRIPPINA.

This day, my love, the *Britane* prisoners
Sent from *Ostorius Scapula*, and late
Arriv'd at *Rome*, shall be in publike shew'd.
There thou shalt see that brave *Barbarian* Prince,
That bold *Caractacus*, whose stubborne spirit
So many yeares contemn'd the *Roman* power.
Hee now is taken.

Pollio.

'Twas a victory
Sent from the Gods to honor *Claudius* reigne.

Agrippina.

Had he been basely taken, or at first
Yielded himselfe, as hee had got no honour,
But been forgotten in his fall, and nought
Had e're been mention'd of him but his death:
So had thy glory *Cesar* been farre lesse.

Vitellius.

Not warre-like *Syphax* the *Numidian* King,
Stubborne *Jugurtha*, nor great *Perseus*
Are brought to *Rome* by their captivity
More reall honour then this *Britane* Prince.

Cesar.

Nor doe wee price our name *Britannicus*
Fetch'd from that Iland, lesse then *Scipio*
His honour'd name of *Africanus* priz'd.

Pollio.

Thy stile, O *Cesar*, is the greater farre
Drawne from the conquest of another world,
Which nature ment by enterposing cold
And stormy seas, to guard from *Latian* armes.

Vitellius.

Great *Julius Cesar* did but only shew
That land to us, whose conquest was reserv'd
By heavens decree to honour *Claudius* name.

Agrippina.

Cesar, let's sit together; one *Tribunall*

Will

AGNIPPINA.

Will hold us both.

It shall bee so, my love,
Thou, as my selfe, shalt pardon or condemne.

A C T U S II.

POPPÆA, OTHO.

Poppæa.

MY love, deare *Otho*, faine would bid thee stay:
But danger now forbids it, for my Lord
Returns by this time homewards from the Pallace.

Otho.

Wee must obey the times necessity
Sweetest *Poppæa*, though I part from thee
With such a sadnesse as will loose by all
Comparisons. and cannot bee exprest.
But by it selfe, to say that *Otho* parts
From faire *Poppæa*, is more tragicall
Then soule from body, honour from a man.

Poppæa.

I could, mee thinkes, flatter my feares, to keepe
Thee ever heere.

Otho.

And I can scorne all feares,
And dangers too, if thou command mee stay.

B.

Poppæa.

AGRIPPINA.

Poppæa. No, goe, my Love, and warily let's meete
That wee may often meete : but why should still
Our highest blisse want freedome?

Otho.

'Tis, my faire one,
The envy of the Gods, who thinke the state
Of men would aqall theirs, if greatest joyes
Were easiest to obtaine, and therefore still
In horrid dangers wrap their dearest guits,
As all the Poëts ancient fables taught.
Fire-breathing Bulls did guard the Colchian fleece;
A waking dragon kept the golden fruit.
But thou, *Poppæa*, in my thoughts a prize
Of greater value, and more lustre farre
Then that which drew the bold Thessalian forth
So farre from Greece, or made Alcmenaes sonne
Invade th' Hesperides, art kept from mee
By stronger guards, the awfull Roman lawes,
Those lawes resist our love.

Poppæa.

Oh where was *Otho*

Then, when my virgin blossome was the hope
Of thousand noble youths? hadst thou beene seene
In *Poppæa*'s bed and beautyes had beene thine,
And with a lawfull uncontrolled flame
Had met thy wish in those delights, which now
Wee are inforc'd to steale.

Otho.

Must it bee so
or ever then?

Poppæa.

It must while *Rufus* lives.

Otho.

Nor can I blame blest *Rufus*, if hee strive
To keepe that wealth, which is it lay beyond

The

AGRIPPINA.

The Indian *Ganges*, Scythian *Tanais*,
Or horned *Ammons* scorch'd and thirsty sands,
Would draw the Roman Monarch to forsake
His worlds Imperiall seat there to enjoy,
And think those banish'd that remain'd at Rome.
If I were *Cesar*, and condemn'd by fate
To want *Poppæes* love, I should bee poore:
No other deare prerogative could that
High wreath bestow, but only power to make
Thee mine without a rivall: I might then
With boldnesse take thee from *Crispinus* armes.

Poppæa.

But could that act bee lawfull?

Otho.

Canst thou doubt it?

Where two loves meete can marriage bee unlawfull?
Of which love is the soule, the very forme
That gives it being no dead outward ty,
But natures strong and inward sympathy.
Can make a marriage, which the Gods alone
Have power to breede in us, and therefore they
Have only power to ty so sweete a knot.
I am thy mate; nor did thy father, when
Hee gave that snowy hand unto another,
Ought but rebell against the Gods decree.

Poppæa.

Thou art to good an advocate, and I
Too partiall for a judge.

Otho.

Bee constant to mee
Till fortune give a bolder privilege,
And warrant to our love, of which I have
Receiv'd such faire prefages, as I cannot
Despaire, meane while by stealth I must behold
Those starry eyes, and think my selfe most happy
In that, though no man know my happinesse.

Poppæa.

A G R I P P I N A.

Poppæa.

Can men count those delights a happinesse
Which they conceale?

Otho.

Yes, those that truly love.

Enter Fulvia.

Fulvia.

Madam, my Lord is come.

Poppæa.

Farewell deare *Otho.*

Otho.

Farewell: love guard thee till wee meete againe;

exit.

Enter CRISPINUS, GETA.

Crispinus.

Come *Lucius* study to forget it now,

And let's bee truly merry; my *Poppæa*

bid' *Lucius* *Geta* welcome, my colleague.

That was, but still my friend.

Poppæa.

You are most welcome.

Geta.

Thanks fairest Lady.

Poppæa.

At my Lord, what meanes

that speech of yours, that *Lucius* *Geta* once

was your colleague and is not.

Crispinus.

tell thee;

that *Agrippina* has commanded *Cæsar*

to command *Pallas*, to command us two.

I quit our charge and suddainly resigne

the government of the Prætorian campe

to *Burrhus* hand; at which hee stormes; but I

in merryer farre, and lighter then before

may live freely now; *Cæsar* has tane

weighty burthen from my weary necke.

Take his goodnesse.

Geta

A G R I P P I N A.

Geta.

Thanke his sottishnesse,
Tis that has pleased you. ah friend it needes
Must grieve all noble hearts, that can love justice;
And pity suffering innocence, to see
The harmelesse yeares of young *Britannicus*
Expos'd to all the malice of his foes,
And stupid *Cesar* made the instrument
To ruine his owne sonne: whilest his great power
By others is abus'd against himselfe
And his posterity.

Crispinus.

I do beleive it.

Geta.

His servants all, that to himselfe were true,
Or faithfull to his sonne, are murder'd now,
Or else displac'd by her: our truth's the cause
That wee have lost our places.

Crispinus.

Tis no matter;
Wee loose no honour by our truth; and since
While wee had power, wee faithfully discharg'd
Our trust to *Cesar*, let's no longer stirve
To guard him 'gainst his will; but take his gift.
Hee gives us ease, and freedome, to retire,
And tast the sweetes of privacy; and there
Enjoy our lives free from the glorious noise,
And troubles of a Court; instead of waiting
On *Cesar* now, on thee I will bestow
That time, my faire *Poppæa*, and attend
On thy delights; thou wilt not cast mee off
As *Cesar* does.

Fulvia.

Shee cannot promise you
I know her heart better then you in that.

Crispinus.

AGRIPPINA.

Crispinus.

None can describe the sweetes of countrey life
But those blest men that do enjoy, and tast them.
Plaine husband men, though farre below our pitch
Of fortune plac'd, enjoy a wealth above us.
To whome the earth with true and bountious justice
Free from warres cares returns an easy food.
They breath the fresh and uncorrupted aire,
And by cleare brookes enjoy untroubled sleepes.
Their state is fearelesse, and secure, enrich'd
With severall blessings, such as greatest Kings
Might in true justice envy, and themselves
Would count too happy, if they truly knew them.

Geta.

'Tis true, *Crispinus*, greatest Monarchs oft
Have in the midst of all theyr carefull gloryes
Desir'd such lives as those plaine people lead.

Crispinus.

Let us enjoy that happinesse then *Lucius*
The countrey sports and recreations
And friends as innocent as wee, with whom
Wee need not feare the strength of richest wine
drawing out our secrets: but well fill'd
At supper time may hold a free discourse
Of *Cæsar's* weakenesse, of the wealth and pride
Of his freed'men, how lordly *Pallas* rules;
How fierce and cruell *Agrippina* is,
What slaves the Roman Senate are become,
And yet next morne awake with confidence.

Poppæa.

All this, my Lord, you may discourse at Rome
You can wisely choose your company.

Crispinus.

Well said *Poppæa*, thou art a woman right
Thou lov'st the city well.

Geta.

AGRIPPINA.

Geta.

I cannot blame her,
Such beauty seekes no corners, but may well
Become th' Imperiall city of the world.

Crispinus.

Come *Lucius Geta*, let's goe in and laugh
At our proud enemyes, enjoy their malice,
And drowne our cares in rich *Falernian* wine
As ancient as *Opimus* Consulship.

Enter to them **NARCISSUS.**

Geta.

Here comes a man, *Crispinus*, I beleive
Is sory for this change.

Crispinus.

I thinke so *Lucius*.

Narcissus.

Haile noble *Romans*.

Crispinus.

Haile to you *Narcissus*.
How dare you venture a salute on us,
Or make a visite to such guilty men?

Narcissus.

Guilty my Lord, in what?

Crispinus.

In beeing wrong'd.
Those that are wrong'd in Court, are made offendours.

Narcissus.

I must confesse, my Lord, it was a wrong
To you and your Colleague to bee displac'd,
But you have spirits great enough to scorne
That injury, and pity him that did it,
I meane that suffer'd his proud foes to doo it
Rather against himselfe then you; the wrong
Must fall on *Cesar*, and his haplesse house.
Blinded by fate, and neere his fall, hee throwes
Away the best supporters of his state.

Geta.

AGRIPPINA.

Geta.

The thought of that as I am true, *Narcissus*,
Afflicts mee more then mine owne losse can doe.

Crispinus.

For mee, I thinke my selfe well free'd from trouble
Were't not for feare of poore *Britannicus*.

Narcissus.

I doo beleeeve it, noble Lords; but you
Are now discharg'd, and may retire with safety.

My part is yet to play, a part of danger,
And I will act it bravely: here I vow

By all the Gods, no feare shall make mee shrinke
Till I have once more righted *Claudius*

Against the lusts and treasons of a wife.
Nor do I boast of *Messalinae* death.

It was the times necessity, that made
Mee then to shew my power: that power perchance

Is yet as much; nor shall the Lordly *Pallus*,
Though swell'd with *Agrippinae* lustfull favours,

And back'd by her authority, hee thinke
Himselfe sole ruler in th' Imperiall house,

Finde that *Narcissus* is so fall'n in spirit.
But that I dare attempt as much as then.

Great *Cesar's* safety is as much in danger
As then it was, his nuptiall bed as stain'd,

And I will dy, or take the same revenge,
That then was taken; all their plots and treasons

Will I reveale to *Cesar*, and pursue it
With such a dauntlesse constancy, that if

The Gods forget not to bee just, this day
Proud *Agrippina*, and her minion fall.

The young *Britannicus* shall stand secure
In his high birthright; *Messalinae* ghost

shall then perchance, although shee hate mee now,
Forgive the hand that caus'd her overthrow.

AGRIPPINA.

Geta.

Bravely resolu'd, *Narcissus.*

Crispinus.

You shall doe
An act that all good men shall thank you for.
Will you goe in, and tast my wine?

Narcissus.

Not now.

I came but only to reveale my purpose
To you, whose noble wishes may befriend it,
And when occasion serves, may truly witness
My just intents; this hower I am expected
By *Cæsar* in his gardens; there I'll put
My life upon the hazard; every minute
May breede a change, and all delays have danger.
For *Cæsar* upon those discoveries
That I already have made to him, utter'd
Some words last night at supper in his wine.
Of which I feare that *Agrippina* tooke
Too great a notice; therefore speede must helpe us.
Farewell my Lords.

Ambo.

Farewell: the Gods assist thee.

Exiunt.

O T H O.

Otho.

So rich a bondage is *Poppeas* love,
That I were base if I should wish for freedome,
Nay more, ingrate, should I desire to change
So sweete a care for quietnesse it selfe;
Should I suppose that state, which some dull soules
Call calme content, were halfe so rich, so free
As are these pinings, this captivity.
Were there in love no cares, no sighs, no feares,
There were in love no happinesse at all.
What blisse, what wealth did ere the world bestow
On man, but cares and feares attended it?

Ye

AGRIPPINA.

Yet who so base, as, to bee freed from those,
 Would throw away the highest blisse on earth?
 Let silly shipheards, whose poore narrow soules
 Not much exceede the beasts they tend and feede,
 That know, like them, no farther regions
 Then some few feilds, no larger bounds of pleasure
 Then satisfaction of bare natures needes,
 Bee still secure since they have nought to loose,
 And rest content because they never knew
 What cities were, and gorgeous *Pallaces*.
 Should Monarchs, who are taught to know th' extent
 Of natures wealth, and what the world affords,
 Forgoe their glorious fortunes, cause they want
 That wretched thing, which only ignorance,
 And low contempt can give, Security?
 Should I forgoe my faire *Poppæes* love
 Because some cares, some feares, and sighs attend it:
 When every smile of hers can recompence
 A thousand such? were too much poorenesse in mee
 Had I nere seene those starry eyes of hers
 More haplesse farre my ignorance had beene.
 I had, like wretched men, that are borne blinde,
 Nere knowne there was a Sunne to guild the world.
 But to injoy her love without all feares,
 Without all rivalls, were a blisse beyond
 Mortality: the Gods would envy mee.
 Shee's now another mans: that may bee thought
 The greatest barre to *Otho's* happinesse.
 But I have framed in my jealous thoughts
 A greater barre then that: young *Nero Caesar*,
 In whose acquaintance I of late have found
 So neere a roome, as faire presages tell us,
 Is like to weareth' Imperiall wreath: his power
 May take her for mee from *Crispinus* armes.
 But then perchance I loose her more then ever.
 Or should hee see her now to rivall mee

I were

A G R I P P I N A.

I were undone: hee's amorous, and oft
 Sollicites mee to let him see my Mistres.
 I for that friendship, which I dare not loose,
 Dare not deny his importunity.
 And therefore to prevent what may ensue
 (For yet hee never heard *Poppæas* name)
 I have made love to the faire freed woman
 Young *Acte* of meane ranke, but such a face,
 As whosoever had not seene *Poppæa*
 Would thinke this *Acte* natures Masterpeice.
 On her will I divert young *Nero's* love,
 And to that purpose I have got her picture.
 But here hee comes.

Enter Nero.

Nero.

What *Otho*, still retir'd?
 Where lives the face that breeds this melancholy?
 There is no other cause can doe't: I know
 Thou art not busy'd with affaires of state.
 I prithee let mee see her: a friends counsell
 May ease thy passion.

Otho.

'Tis not fit a Prince
 Should stoope so low as to the passions
 Of privatemens.

Nero.

The name of friend admits
 Of no such distance.

Otho.

Sir, no man, whom you
 Are pleas'd to call a friend, deserves that name,
 Unless hee know himselfe to bee your servant.

Nero.

Come prithee leave thy fooling, and bee plaine.
 Where there is no familiarity
 Society is lost: why art thou fearfull
 To let mee see her whosoere shee bee?

Otho.

AGRIPPINA.

Otho.
 Sr. I could give you a plaine common reason,
 If thee bee foule, thee is not worth your fight.
 If faire, you are too great a rivall for mee.
 But yer, know Sr. I am so free from those
 Unworthy feares, that I dare trust my life,
 My love, and all I have into your hands.

Nero.
 Spoke like a friend, and thou maist safely doe't.
 Then first behold her picture, and by that
 Find whether thee bee worth the fight or no.

Nero.
 Can any mortall beauty bee so sweete ?

Otho.
 I would there were not.

Nero.
 Sure the painter flatters.

Otho.
 Oh no, hee had not art enough to reach
 The glory of it; were the substance here
 How dull would this now lovely table show !
 See how his greedy eyes devoure the picture.
 Hee's caught, hee's caught, Cupid' I thanke thee uow.

Nero.
 I never saw true beauty till this houre.
 But wherfore didst thou wish there were no substance
 So sweete as this ? why would'st thou bee depriv'd
 Of such a happinesse ? but I perceive
 It is thy feare : come, let it not bee so.
 I but desire to see whether the painter
 Have err'd or no : and do not thinke, my *Otho*,
 That I will wrong thy love so much, or make
 My wife *Octavia* jealous.

Otho.
 S. how ere,
 My life, my love, and fortunes all are yours.

Exeunt.
 CLAU

AGRIPPINA.

CLAUDIUS, NARCISSUS.

Narcissus.

Your Majesty may yet prevent it all,
And justly throw upon the Traitors heads
That ruine which so boldly threatens you,
And your too much abused family,
Yet *Cesar* may bee safe, if hee will use
That power the Gods have put into his hands.

Cesar.

What course, *Narcissus*, can wee run, to make
The people sensible of our estate,
What danger threatens us, and how our Justice
Is forc'd to meete the treasons of a wife?

Narcissus.

Let not too vaine a care of popular breath,
Or what the Vulgar may surmise, outweigh
The safety of youre person^e and youre house.
But I am most assur'd that all the world
Except youre selfe, have long observ'd thaire plots,
And if they see your waken'd Justice now
Arise to censure *Agrippinaes* death,
They will not thinke the execution done
Too soone on her: these humble knees, Oh *Cesar*.
Which for your safety I so oft have bow'd
Before the Gods, now to your sacred selfe
I bow, entreating that you would bee safe,
And not beleeve the Gods by miracle
Will worke for you, whelst you neglect your selfe.

Cesar.

Arise *Narcissus*, tis th' unhappy fate
Of Princes ever (as *Augustus Cesar*
Was wont to say) the people ne're beleeve
That treasons were plotted 'gainst their persons
Untill those treasons take effect, and then
Too late perchance they pity and beleeve.

Nar-

AGRIPPINA.

Narcissus.

But was the wife *Augustus* therefore slow
Or timorous to cut offenders off?
Fear'd hee the peoples whispers? *Caesar*, no.
Hee well knew to use the sword hee had.
Hee had not else liv'd till times gentle hand
Dissolv'd in peace his long felicity,
And made the world by such continuance
Of power, beleeve hee was a God on earth.

Caesar.

But some offendours are too great to suffer
The common course of Justice: against such
Wise Princes have forborne to draw the sword,
And rather sought some wayes of policy
How to ensnare them.

Narcissus.

Caesar, those are wayes
As much unfit for Princes as unsafe.
As many Monarchs have in dangerous times
Beene ruin'd quite by going wayes too low
(Though they have seem'd subtle) as proud subjects
Have beene undone by playing Princes parts.
And as this high, and open way befits
The power and person of earths greatest Monarch:
So it befits the times necessity.
You have already, *Caesar*, shew'd your sword,
And if you strike not now, you do not right
Your selfe at all, but only arme your foes
With plots of mischeife to prevent their owne,
And hasten on your quicke destruction.
You have already threaten'd, and those speeches
By *Agrippina*, and her minion *Pallas*
Were overheard; who, like seene snakes will now
Bestirre themselves in a more desperate fury.
I have already cast mine owne poore life
Into the utmost hazard: but alas!

Thar

AGRIPPINA.

That is a thing not now considerable.
 The Gods above can tell how willingly
 For *Cesar's* safety I would sacrifice
 This life; make mee the cheifest instrument
 Impose what part of this exploit you please
 Upon *Narcissus* hand, and if I faile
 To execute, I'll not refuse to dy.

Cesar.

Oh my *Narcissus*; I have found thy faith
 In other services: it is resolv'd,
 Their pride shall feele my justice; thou shalt see
 How soone I will secure my self and thee. *Exeunt.*

AGRIPPINA, PALLAS.

Agrippina.

Wee are discover'd *Pallas*: all our drifts
 Are founded by *Narcissus*, and by him
 Lay'd ope to *Cesar*, who dissembling yet
 The knowledge of it, seekes a suddaine way
 To ruine both of us: nor had wee fear'd
 So soone as felt his fury, had not wine
 Betray'd his thoughts to us; you know last night
 What speeches *Cesar* in his drunkennesse
 Let fall before us; and 'twas lately told mee
 That meeting young *Britannicus* hee wept,
 Confest that hee had wrong'd him, and there vow'd
 A quicke redresse: what counsell shall wee take?

Pallas.

Wee have no time for counsell: but must act
 As soone as thinke: wee goe not now to worke
 But to prevent a mischeife, and our cure
 Must bee as strong, and quicke of operation
 As our disease is dangerous and suddaine.
 That bird, that sees the snare, and will bee caught
 Deserves his death: and siuce that *Cesar* knowes
 His purpose is discover'd (as *Narcissus*
 Ha's before this inform'd him that wee heard it)

Hee'll

AGRIPPINA.

Hee'l quickly act what else hee had deferr'd.
No way is left us but to meete the danger,
And for prevention first attempt to doe
That which wee feare to suffer.

Agrippina.

By what meanes
Shall wee procure his death? for poison slow
Perchance may faile to lend a timely helpe
Vnto our safety; and too quicke a venome
May make the fact suspected.

Pallas.

Should the fact
Bee nere so much suspected, your estate
Would bee more safe then now it is; but who
Would dare to utter it when *Cesar's* dead,
And your owne Sonne the Emperour: for so
My confidence assures mee it will bee.
Therefore bee speedy, Madam; for your danger
Where fame, where life, and Empire all are threaten'd,
Gives you no nice election. So 't bee done
No matter how.

Agrippina.

Thou hast confirm'd mee, *Pallas.*
The way's resolv'd already; there were lately
The fairest mushrooms sent from Lybia
That ere these eyes beheld, a meat which hee
Affects with greedinesse; in one of those
Cesar shall meete his death; if that should faile
His cheife *Physitian Xenophon* is mine.
But are things strong, and ready to confirme
The Empire upon *Nero*.

Pallas.

Tis the best
And happiest time, before *Britannicus*
Bee growne to riper yeares, while yet hee weares
His childish robe, and *Nero* has beene showne

To

AGRIPPINA.

To all the people in triumphall weeds.
But when the deed is done, place warily
Your guards about the Pallace gates, and keepe
Britannicus within ; whilest *Nero* back'd
By *Seneca* and *Burrhus*, by the campe
And *Senate* bee saluted Emperour,
And all be fetled sure.

Agrippina.

How fit a time
To work his own destruction *Cesar* chose
To tempt with threatening *Agrippinas* fury!

ACTUS III. SCENA. I.

PETRONIUS, OTHO,
MONTANUS.

Petronius.

Is *Nero* fir'd?

Otha.

Extremely. I at first
Seem'd melancholy to loose *Agrippa* so,
And hee seem'd loath to wrong mee; but at last
When his desires were high, I cunningly
Withdrew my interest, and gave way to his.
Which hee has taken for the greatest favour

C

The

AGRIPPINA.

That ever man could doe him and I hope
It has endear'd him strongly.

Montanus.

Thou wilt grow
A happy man.

Petronius.

'Tis the best way to rise.

The wench is faire, and of behaviour

Wanton enough to make the arrantst novice

A perfect scholler in the schoole of *Venus*.

Seneca himselve rather will give way

That hee should satisfie his lust on her

Then seeke th'adulteries of noble women.

Montanus.

But gentlemen, have you not heard the newes?

There is a great combustion in the Palace

As I have been inform'd theeyes are fall'n out.

The two proud freemen *Pallas* and *Narcissus*

Are clashing 'gainst each other.

Petronius.

I am glad ont.

I hope some curious rogeries will come on't.

Those are the fellows that have rul'd the state

These many yeeres, and trample on the lives

Of noble men *Cesar's* credulous weakenesse.

But yet mee thinks *Narcissus* should not dare

Now to contest with *Pallas* he has got

Too great a start of him, and is too neere

Acquainted with the emperresse.

Montanus.

So they say.

Otho.

Has a fine time on't who would think the rogue

Should bee so ambitious as to court an Emperresse?

Petronius.

'Twas her ambitions to bee made the wife

Of

A G R I P P I N A.

Of *Claudius*, that first made her prostitute
Her selfe so low, and court this fellows love,
Whom she perceiv'd to have a ruling power
Over his doating master, to ambition
Shee sacrific'd her honour tis well known.

Montanus.

And hee by dooing of the Empreffe, takes
The surest way of keeping *Cæsars* love

Petronius.

Yes, there's no doubt of that. You know the proverbe,

Enter to them *ANICETUS*.

Anicetus.

Well met my Lords; I come to finde you out.

Otho.

What's the newes *Anicetus*?

Anicetus.

Great my Lord.

Cæsar, is wondrous sick; 'tis thought to death.

The Pallas is by souldiers guarded round.

A great and frequent *Senate* is assembling.

The Consuls and the Priests are making vowes

For *Cæsar's* safery.

Montanus.

Claudius is old

Petronius.

There have been other wayes to end a Prince

Besides old age. But what is that to us?

Come let's away and shew our forwardnesse

To joy or mourning as occasion serves.

I am prepar'd for both.

Montanus.

And so am I.

Otho.

Both must be done, if *Cæsar* dye; our greife

Must last but till the successor bee known;

And then wee must rejoyce.

C 2

Petron.

AGRIPPINA.

Enter Ptolemæus.
Tis true.

But I

Shall have true cause of joy if Nero reigns, *Exit.*

BRITANNICUS, OCTAVIA,

XENOPHON.

Britannicus
Shall I not see my father ere hee dy?

Octavia.
Good Xenophon.

Xenophon.

Good Madam pardon mee,
Nothing is now so great an enemy
To his disease as noise and company.
Hee's lately fall'n into a gentle slumber.
Deep sleeps his fever will not let him take.
I'll certify your highnesse when hee wakes.
And wait upon you.

Octavia.

Thanks good Xenophon. *Exit.*

AGRIPPINA.

Agrippina.

I long to heare what favour Nero findes
In the Pretorian campe, how *Cesar's* death
Is by the souldiers and the Senate taken.

Enter PALLAS.

Welcome my dearest *Pallas*. What's the newes?

Pallas.

Madam, as good as *Jove* himselfe could send,
No sooner in the campe was *Cesar's* death
Divulgd, but *Burrhus* enters to his charge,
And *Nero* with him, who by all the cohorts
Was presently saluted Emperour.
Only some few were slow, and a while
Stood still expecting young *Britannicus*;

But

AGRIPPINA.

But when they saw their expectation
Was all in vaine, and none but *Nero* came,
Fearing at last to loose the *Donative*
Which *Burrhus* promis'd them in *Neros* name,
They joynt themselves unto the greater part:

Agrippina.
Britannicus within the *Pallace* here
Is safe enough for consuming forth to day,
The *Senate* have scarce heard of *Cesar's* death
For wee conceal'd it till all things were ready:

Pallas.
Now in a Princely chariot mounted high
Guarded by *Burrhus* and the souldiers
Nero sets forward to the *Senate* house
But having past the campe, you need not feare
The *Senate*, Madam:

Agrippina.
Pallas thou wert ever
A messenger of lucky newes to mee,
A safe contriver of the highest plots,
A happy instrument thou hast deserv'd
What ere thou hast enjoy'd, though thou have tasted
That which a *Cesar* sould to taste, and bought
The world in recompence.

Pallas. If ever *Pallas*
Had any fire that could advance his thoughts
To high and great exploits, hee kindled it
At your caelestiall beaurie, as from heaven
Prometheus stole that active fire, by which
Hee durst himself adventure to create
The noblest creature man: What afe on earth,
What undertaking should he tremble at
Whom *Agrippina* favours animate?
And what had I been but a peece of earth
Cold, dull, and uselesse, had I not been quickn'd
By your aetheriall touch.
Agrippina.
The happinesse

AGRIPPINA.

Of this high day has made thee eloquent

Pallas
The love of royall *Agrippina* can
Inspire the dullest Soule with life and language.
When the *Italian* Queene was pleas'd to grace
A shepheards boy more then his humble thoughts
Could hope or wish, the ravish'd tongue forgot
That rurall language which before it us'd.

Agrippina.
Ah *Pallas* what a glorious change is here!
How is the lownesse of our late despaire
Turn'd to the height of joy and happinesse?

Pallas
Quick resolution well pursu'd will cure
The saddest state.

Agrippina.
Goe thou and heare more newes,
Whilest I dispose of things about the Palace
Exeunt
A SENATE, POLLIO CONSUL, VITELLIUS,
SENECA, OTHO, PETRONIUS,
MONTANUS.

Pollio.
May all the Gods accept our sacrifice,
And bee propitious to the vowes, that wee
Have vow'd for *Caesar's* safety.

Vitellius.
Let the great
Divine and sacred *Nero Claudius*
The care of heaven, sole ruler of the earth,
And *Romes* high Father not forsake his world
So soone r' encrease the number of the Gods,

Enter Burrhus.
Burrhus.
Ile to the *Consul*, and this sacred Senate.
That *Claudius Caesar's* dead, in whose high throne
With one consent the souldiers have agreed

A G R I P P I N A .

To seat young *Nero* his adopted sonne;
And do by mee entreat your suffrages
Fathers conscript ; to ratifie their choice.

Seneca.

Let not young *Nero's* yeeres disparage him,
Nor trouble you, since happy presidents
May well be showne, grave Fathers. Great *Augustus*
Of glorious memory, no more in debt
To yeeres then hee began to rule the state,
With what successe not one in all this noble
And great assembly can bee ignorant.
But weigh with mee the difference of the times.
The state is settled, and has flourish'd long
In peacefull government ; no civill rents.
No factions now, nor armies are a foot
To staine with *Latian* blood *Philippi* plains,
To dye the *Aetiake* and *Sicilian* Seas,
And through all regions beare th' unnaturall wounds
Of bleeding *Rome*. No such affrighting names
As *Marcus Brutus*, *Cassius*, *Lepidus*.
Great *Pompey's* sonne, or seiree *Antonius*
Arm'd with the power of halfe the Roman world
Stand to oppose him. Oh yee Gods how great !
How many dangers had beset the state
When young *Augustus* mannag'd it ! yet hee
Withstood and vanquish'd all those difficulties.
And why should *Nero* our elected Prince
Ag'd like *Augustus*, not bee able now
To sway a peacefull scepter ? for the right
To this high, wreath although *Britannicus*
Were borne the naturall sonne of *Claudius*,
A Prince of hope enough, and may by some
Bee thought much wrong'd in this election,
Yet weigh it rightly, and no wrong is done.
For *Nero* was adopted. But besides
The claime of his adoption, hee is borne

AGRIPPINA.

A truer heire to our Imperiall house
Sprung up from the loines of great *Augustus Caesar*.
Britannicus from *Livia's* sonnes alone.

Vitellius.

Nor are the yeeres of young *Britannicus*
So ripe as his to govern.

Pollia.

Seneca,

Has wisely shewed his undoubted right,
And I with joy approve the souldiers choise.

Othavia.

The Gods preserve *Nero* our Emperour.

Otho.

Now is the height of all my wishes reach'd

Enter *NERO* with *TRIBUNE*.

Tribune.

Roome for *Caesar*.

Hee goes on, and takes his state.

Pollia.

Haile *Nero Caesar*.

Seneca.

Haile great Emperour.

Vitellius.

Ever *Augustus*.

Otho.

Most invincible

Patronius

Most sacred *Tribune*

Montanus.

Holyest highest Priest.

Pollia.

Father of *Rome*

Nero

That honorable title

yet too weighry for my tender yeeres.

Then let mee weare it, fathers, when my paines

My toile and travell for the publike weale

By

A G R I P P I N A.

By ayde and fauour of the Gods have made
 Mee worthy of it. But your free consent
 Fathers conſcript, your powerfull ſuffrages
 Powerfull and honor'd as the voice of heauen
 In confirmation of the ſouldiers choiſe
 Fiſt mee with joy immortall, and ſhall binde
 My beſt indeauours to require that love.
 My heart is cleare, my education
 Was not in factious, in tumultuous times,
 Or civil broiles, my former life has been
 As free from doing as receiving wrong;
 And therefore bring I to th' Imperiall Throne
 No feares, no grudges, hatred or reuenge.
 This ſacred *Senate*, which the world adores
 Shall ſtill retaine her old prerogative
 While *Nero* lives. My privat houſe affayres
 Shall from the free Republicke bee diuided,
 And never turne the courſe of common Juſtice.
 No publike Office ſhall bee bought for gold.
 The ſacred Conſulary power ſhall iudge
 As heretofore, th' affaires of *Italy*.
 And forreigne provinces. My care alone
 Shall bee to rule and lead the Souldiers.
 And ſuch to all the people will I bee
 As I would with th' immortal Gods to mee.

Plotinus.

Oh ſpeech moſt worthy *Jupiter* himſelfe,
 Worthy for ever to be regiſtred
 In brazen Pillars for the world to read.

Pollio.

Let publike thanks by *Senate* bee decreet
 To *Cæſar's* grace and goodneſſe.

Nero.

No *Aſinius*,
 Let me deſerue them firſt, firſt give me leave
 What I haue promiſ'd to performe in deeds.

A G R I P P I N A.

That then if thanks or praises bee bestow'd
They my bee judg'd as due, and better Crowne
Your owne true justice, and the Princes merits.

Pollio.

Oh happy *Rome* in such an Emperour!
Long may hee reigne on earth, and late, oh late
Become a glorious starre in Heaven

Tribune.

What word.
Will *Cesar* give the watching souldiers?

Nero.

The excellent mother, *Tribune*, is their word.
Your company, noble *Consul*, wee'll entreate
Home to the Pallace.

Pollio.

I'll attend on *Cesar*.

Exeunt.

Manent OTHO, PETRONIUS, MONTANUS.

Montanus.

The Prince has promis'd faire.

Petronius.

He *Seneca*,
That made the speech for him had been too blame.

Otho.

Well, let him speake as *Seneca* instructs
In publicke still say I, I know his heart
And secret thoughts better then *Seneca*
Will ever doe; and there are Ioviall dayes
Comm'ing, gallants, say I prophecy.

Montanus.

Will it bee lawfull to eat Lybian mushrooms,
And British oysters without being cited
Before the censor?

Otho.

Yes *Curtius*, and to whose
Vacation after them; those gifts

Will

A. G. R I P P I N A

Will bee Court vertues. Come, the Prince is hopefull.

Petronius.

Would I might have the bringing of him up.

Otho.

If I can helpe it, thou shalt have a share
In his tuition. Welcome *Anicetus*, *Anicetus*
Is it to mee you come?

Anicetus.

To you, my Lord.

Cesar desires your company at the pallace.

Otho.

Cesar's desire, is a command, which I
With joy obey. returne my humble duty
Good *Anicetus*, I'll attend him strait.

Exit Anicetus.

Otho.

Now my mad shavers, do you know me yet?

Petronius.

Yes, very well; the question is if thou
Wilt know us now.

Otho.

Tut man, *Nero* shall know you.
I'll bring you both into his neare acquaintance.
Now faire *Poppæa's* mine and mine alone.
Cesar must grant my first petition,
Or else deny the love hee swore to mee
If ere hee wore the worlds Imperiall wreath.
His power must fetch *Poppæa* from her husband.
Nor is the deed so envious. Other Princes
Have done the like, and yet not tax'd in story.

Petronius.

Besides, hee knowes *Crispinus* never lov'd him,
And was an enemy to his adoption.
'Gainst him perchance hee will the sooner grant it.

Exunt

Agrippina

AGRIPPINA.

Agrip. This is the day that sets a glorious Crown
On all my great designs this day declares
My power, and makes the trembling world to know
That *Agrippina*. only can bestow
The Roman Empire, and command the wheel
Of suffering Fortune, holding in her hand
The fate of nation. Is there not a name
Above *Augusta* to enform the world
How great I am? What Roman Deity
Shall I assume? the petty Goddesses
Would all resigne; but that they blushing think
Their stiles and altars are too meane for mee.
Ensigne *Juno* shall bee proud to share
Her gloryes all with mee, and think her power
Crac'd with my fellowship would brighter shine;
Or leave her name, and bee ador'd by mine.

Enter NERO, POLLIÖ, SENECA,

Burrhus.

My *Nero* is return'd, haile *Nero Cesar*.

Nero.

Haile great and deare *Augusta*, best of Mothers.
To whose sole care and goodnesse *Cesar* owes
All those rich honours that he weares to day,
And will acknowledge ever

Agrippina.

Brighter still
For many yeeres let this blest day returne,
That does bestow for my deare Lord and husband
There's enough lamented *Claudius*
To true a solace on my greiv'd Soule.
This is that *Cesar* now, on whom my hopes
And comforts all rely.

Nero.

This is that *Cesar*.
Who in obedience and true filiall love
To *Agrippina* will for ever strive

With

AGRIPPINA.

With vertuous emulation to excell
Her most admir'd and exemplary goodnesse.

Pollia.

How well this piety becomes them both.

Pallas.

Enter Pallas.

Long live great *Nero Caesar.*

Nero.

Thankes good *Pallas.*

Wee are indebted to thy faithfull service;
And therefore till wee finde some greater meanes
To make requitall, still remaine that office
Which in our father *Claudius* time thou heldst.
Bee still our steward of th' *Emperiall* house.

Agrippina.

Hee has deserv'd it.

Nero.

For the funerals
Of our dead father, in what state and order
They shall bee celebrated, wee refer
To you deare Mother.

Agrippina.

Let the order of them
Bee like *Augustus Caesar's*. Let him have
A Censors funeralls with divine honours,
And put among the number of the Gods.
Nor shall our grandmother great *Livia*
With her *Tiberius* to *Augustus* show
More piety, or more magnificence
Then wee to our divinst *Claudius*.

Exeunt.

A C T U S IIII.

NARCISSEUS, GETA.

Narcissus.

If wee bee bound to think the Gods consider

A G R I P P I N A.

This humane world, why are wee not as well
 Bound to beleeve the greatest members of it
 On whom the fates of all the rest depend,
 Should be their greatest care? why should the Gods
 Extend their narrow providence, and show
 Their power in woods and rurall villages;
 Yet thinke th' Imperiall family of *Rome*
 Not worth their care at all? for if they had
 Where slept their justice, when great *Claudius*
 Was murdred by his servants and his wife,
 And they ador'd, and honour'd by the state
 For acting that accursed deed! what right
 Can all the subject world receive from thence!
 What good can dwell upon the earth with safety?
 Proud *Pallas*, thou hast got the victory
 O're poore *Narcissus*, and mayest safely triumph
 With thy false Empresse; for no law can reach
 The height you soare at now but yet take heed
 That very crime, the same Impiety
 That aided you in your foule enterprise
 To vanquish mee and justice on my side,
 May one day pull you downe.

Geta.

Alas *Narcissus*!

Too truly *Rifus*, thou, and I foresaw
 This fatall storme 'gainst *Claudius* wofull house:
Britannicus is now the object growne
 Of all mens pitty.

Narcissus.

In the wrong hee did
 Into his hopefull sonne hee needs must see
 His own destruction woven. But if *Claudius*,
 When I detected all their plots to him,
 Had beene of nature quick and resolute
 Hee had prevented all, and scap'd his murder.
 A certaine hee was poison'd

Geta

AGRIPPINA.

Geta.

Rome it selfe
I feare will rue that sad adoption;
And in the wrongs of young *Britannicus*
Will beare too deepe a share. while the first rule
Of *Agrippina* lasts.

Narcissus.

What better hope
Does *Nero* promise us?
Those that are neere,
And inward with his nature, doe suspect:
Xiphilin
In him all seedes of vice and tyranny,
Though smother'd for a time, at least, not hurtfull
While he refraines from meddling with the state
That his night rambling revels, drinking feasts,
And cruell sports that he's delighted in,
Are vices of his nature, not his youth.

Geta:

Tis true, *Narcissus*, I of late have heard
Many beginne to feare the prophecy
of *Aenobarbus* his detested sire
That nothing good could be begot twixt him
And *Agrippina*. Too too true alas!
Such prophecies of some of our late Princes
Have prov'd to *Rome*, as that *Augustus* made
Of the slow-jaw'd *Tiberius*, and *Tiberius*
Of his successour *Caligula*, whom hee nam'd,
A Phaëton to the unhappy world.

Xiphilin.

Narcissus:

All that I hope for is a wretched life,
If that bee not too much for mee to hope:
Into *Campania* will I go, but there
If death pursue mee, *Cesar's* armes are long,
And I am arm'd for any accident.
Let none, but with a spirit prepar'd to dye,
Dare to adventure on prosperity.

Geta.

AGRIPPINA.

Geta.

Rufus and I are both resolv'd to leave
The city too, wee are not safe within it.
But farreperchance, removed from her sight
Wee may escape tell *Agrippinas* spight.

Enter to them *CRISPINUS.*

Crispinus.

Ah *Lucius Geta*, I am now enforc'd
To that retirement, which wee lately talk'd of.
Because my danger mov'd mee not before,
Fresh cause is giv'n mee. Now I would not breath
The aire of *Rome* for all the wealth within it.

Geta.

What cause is that *Crispinus*? speake

Crispinus.

Poppaea,

That was my wife is carried from my house,
And divorc'd from mee by command from *Cæsar*,

Narcissus

The Prince begins his reigne most hopefully.

Crispinus.

Do you not wonder how I beare it thus?

Geta.

I must confesse the losse is wondrous great.

Crispinus.

True, had shee been my chaste and faithfull wife,

The losse had been beyond all estimation.

Nor could a manly spirit have borne the wrong.

But shee was none of mine, her heart, my *Lucius.*

As I have since discover'd, long ago

Was given to wanton *Orho*, and with him

Is thought she stole her close adulterous houres.

For on that *Orho*, *Nero* has bestow'd her.

Xiphilin ex

Wanting her heart, that gawdy peice of Earth

Dione

That men call beauty, I should soone have scorn'd,

Though *Cæsar's* warrant had not come at all.

Shall

AGRIPPINA.

Shall wee be gone, my friend?

Geta.

With all my heart.

It was my feare *Poppas* would have caus'd

Your stay too long.

Crispinus.

I'll put her from my thoughts.

Narcissus.

Farewell my Lords, all happinesse attend

Your Country life, though I can hope for none.

Crispinus

Farewell *Narcissus* may the Gods protect thee. *Exeunt.*

Otho, Poppas.

Otho,

Thus greatest Monarchs oft have given away

What they themselves ne're saw, nor e're knew how

To value truly. *Nero* has bestow'd

A gift unknown on mee, which I, that taste

How sweet it is, would not againe forgo

For all his Empires wealth.

Poppas.

Nor would I change

My *Otho's* love for great *Augustus* state.

Otho.

There to enjoy where both extreemly love

Is such a happines (as I have heard

Some do observe) it seldome does befall

A married paire, or if it doe, that blisse

Endures not long, so envious are the fates.

But that's a dreame, my love, I doe not feare.

Poppas.

Thou need'st not feare *Poppas* constancy

Though *Cesar* were thy rivall,

Otho.

Sweet I do not;

I dare not wrong thy truth, or take so much

From mine own happinesse, as to suspect

Thy

AGRIPPINA.

Thy constant minde at all: but *Cesar's* power
Is of extent as large as mans desire.

'Twas that, that made thee mine; and nought but that
That gave, can take my happinesse away.

Thou hast a face, *Poppæa*, that would cleare
A ravisher from guilt, that would excuse
The treason of a freind, and make my wrong
No staine to *Cesar's* honour, though the Gods,
Or *Cato* were his judges.

Poppæa.

Cesar would not;
Hee loves thee wel besides a noble minde
Would scorn to taste the fruites of forced love,

Otho.

A long besiedging is as forcible
As an assault, and wins the fort as sure
Though not so soone.

Poppæa.

Nay spare your arguments.
I can looke through them; thou art fearfull, *Otho*,
That I should long to see the Court: alas
I have no such ambition to bee known
To *Agrippina* or *Ottavia*.

Otho.

Mistake mee not, sweete love, I am so farre
From jealousy of thee, that 'twas my purpose,
To make it my request that thou wouldst go
And see great *Cesar's* Court: nor do I thinke
Ottavia would bee jealous, or that danger
That once befell the faire *Calphurnia*,
Whom *Agrippina* banish'd Italy
Because that *Claudius Cesar* prais'd her beauty,
Should fall on thee.

Poppæa.

It shall not fall on mee,
I will noe see the Court: fy *Otho* fy

How

A G R I P P I N A.

How wretchedly in striving to conceale
Thy jealousy, thou dost betray it to mee!
Why dost thou tell mee so of *Cæsar's* power,
Octavia's wrath, *Calphurnia's* banishment
Through *Agrippina's* envy? tis thy love
Better then all these subtle tricks will keepe
My thoughts at home.

Orho.

It shall appeare to thee
I do not feare at all; or if I did;
Tis not the failing of thy constancy.
Enjoy what freedome thou desir'st, *Poppæa*.
Now for a little while excuse my absence,
I must for sake thee, though unwillingly.
Cæsar, I feare, expected my return
Long before this love has beguil'd the time,
And made my stay seeme shorter then it is.
But I shall think till I returne againe
The houres are long, till then farewell *Poppæa*. *Exit.*

Poppæa.

I finde his feares alreadie, my estate
Was better farre before *Rufus Crispinus*
Was grave, and knew not wantonnesse enough
To make him jealous as this *Orho* does
That too unlawfull love, which then I shew'd
To *Orho*, is the mother of these feares.
Is old *Seleucus* the Magician come; *Enter Fulvia*

Fulvia;

Madam hee waites without,
Poppæa.

Go call him hither.
Seleucus is the master of his Art.
All his prædictions hitherto have prov'd
Most true and certaine. why should I desire
To know my future fate; and hasten woe
(Should it prove ill) before the time of woe?

But

AGRIPPINA.

But tis a longing that I cannot check. *Enter Seleucus.*
Welcom *Seleucus*, have you found it out?

Seleucus.
Madam, your scheme is drawn, and there I finde
The stars alot another husband to you

Poppa.
Another after *Orho*?

Seleucus.
Yes, a third.

Poppa.
What shall hee bee?

Seleucus.
The greatest Prince on earth.

Poppa.
Ha, *Caesar*?

Seleucus.
Yes; it must be *Caesar*, Madam.
And tis as true as if the oracles
Of *Jove* and *Phabus* had foretold it both.

Poppa.
This *Caesar* that now lives?

Seleucus.
I can no further
Instruct you Madam; what you heare is true.

Poppa.
Drinke this *Seleucus* for my sake. Farewell.

Exit Seleucus.
To bee *Augusta* is the greatest gift

The fates can give; nor does it seeme to mee
A thing so much unlikely. *Orho's* feare

Perchance was fatall. If it were, in vaine
His care will bee, nor can hee then accuse

Mee, but the fates that overrul'd my love.

AGRIPPINA, PALLAS.

Agrippina.
It is decreed, *Silanus* must not live.

Th'

AGRIPPINA.

Th' Imperial blood, that runs within his veins
 Were there no other cause, is crime enough.
 Hee is descended in the same degree
 That *Nero* is from great *Augustus* line.
 And some have lately whisper'd that his age
 Is more mature for sovereignty then *Nero's*.
 Besides thou know'st his brother *Lucius*,
 That should have marryed young *Octavia*,
 By us was hunted to his death; and hee
 May meditate revenge.

Pallas.

You need not feare
 A spirit so sluggish as *Silanus* is.
 Your brother *Caius Caesar*, in the midd'ft
 Of all his feares and jealousyes to which
 Hee sacrific'd so many noble branches
 Of your Imperiall house, condemn'd *Silanus*
 As one in whom there was no spirit, or danger,
 And call'd him nothing but the golden beast.

Agrippina.

Wee cannot tell, if times of trouble come,
 How much that beast by courage of attendants
 And confluence of souldiers may bee chang'd.
 Hee is Proconsul now of *Asia*,
 And may here after, if the people should
 Maligne our government, bring power against us.

Pallas.

If you will have it so *Publius Celerius*
 And *Aelius* now going for *Asia*
 Have undertaken there to poison him.

Agrippina.

Let it bee done. But *Pallas*, first of all
 Let a centurion bee dispatch'd into
 Campania, to kill *Narcissus*. there
 Hee must not live, that did contrive our ruine
 And knowes, I feare, the meanes by which wee scap'd in.

By

AGRIPPINA.

By our command it shall bee warranted.

But tell me Pallas, ere thou goest, are all

The German souldiers come?

Pall: Madam they are.

You have a royall guard. *Ag:* Go dearest Pallas,

Dispatch *Celerius* into *Asia*,

And the Centurion to *Campania*.

Exit Pallas

Now *Agrippina* is her selfe, and all

The power and dignity she holds, her own.

I do not owe it to a marriage bed,

Or poore dependance on a husbands love,

Where every minion might have rival'd mee.

There is no power, no state at all, but what

Is independent, absolute and free.

Besides my proper and peculiar guards

Two lictors by the *Senate* are assign'd

Distinct from *Cesar* and the Consuls state

To waite on mee, that all the world at last

Th' Imperiall power may in a woman know.

I was an Emperesse but ne're reign'd till now.

Exit

A banquet.

Enter **NERO, BRITANNICUS, OTHO, PE-**

TRONIUS, MONTANUS, ACTE.

Ne. Come sit my friends, they here are freely welcome

That bring free Joviall hearts farre hence bee all

Sad lookes, fower gestures, and Centonous thoughts.

They fit not *Nero's* table. kisse mee *Acte*,

And smile upon the feast. *Acte:* *Cesar's* command

Is warrant strong enough.

Nero.

And thou shalt finde

No rigid *Catoes* here.

Petronius.

True, great *Cesar*,

Let such fowre *Scauri* sit at home, and write

Against the pleasure of this happy age

Dull sityres, such as water, or the lees

Of

AGRIFFINA.

Of Tuscan wine beget, let them admire
Those old penurious times. when *Curius* fed
On leekes and onions, when *Fabritius*
Feasted the frugall *Senate* with hung beefe
And rusty bacon, and in earthen pots
Drunke smal Etrurian wine, let them bee still
Such as themselves would make themselves, unworthy
To taste the plenty that *Rome* now enjoys.

Nero.

Why did our famed ancestours so farre
Extend their conquering armes, and strive to get
The riches of the world, but that their Nephews
Might now enjoy them? were ingratitude
To their rich labours, should wee scorne to use
What they have got: or if the use of it
In us bee riot, sure 'twas avarice
In them, that toil'd so much to purchase it.

Otho.

Which of those rigid Censors, that declaimed
Against the vices of the times, and tax
Rome as luxurious now would call it vertue
In a rich Citizen, whose store-houses
Were fraught with the best provisions, his chests crow-
His cellars full of rich Campanian wine (ded
Yet hee himselfe to drinke the courtest lees,
To feede on ackornes, pulse, and crabs, to wrong
His nature, and defraud his Genius?
Tis said the Furies keep pin'd *Tantalus*
From tasting those delicious fruits hee sees.
Such would the Roman vertue bee, should shee
Affright her sonnes the masters of the world
From tasting that which they themselves possesse.

Petronius.

Tis true; those former ages were most frugall;
Wee thank them for't, the better is our fare.
Let those that list, now when they have no need,

Stil

AGRIPPINA.

Still imitate, and boast their hungry vertue,
Whilest wee poore sinners are content with pleasures,
Numidian hens, and *Lybias* purple wings
Wilde goates, bores, hares, thrushes, and murtherous
Oysters, and mullets, and such vicious meates.

Nero.

Fill mee some wine. *Montanus* melancholy,
And silent now?

Montanus.

Cesar, I was but listning
To heare *Petronius* good morality.

Nero.

Orbo I know cannot bee melancholy,
Hee is a bridegrome, and but new posselt
Of that faire treasure he has courted
So long, well *Orbo*, I must have a fight
Of faire *Poppea*; such I know shee is.

Orbo.

Shee is unworthy of great *Cesar's* sight.

Nero.

A round, go *Anicetus* bring the lots;
Because that no respect of power shall let
The freedome of our mirth, who ever drawes
The longest cut shall bee our King to night,
And bee obey'd what ere hee shall command.
I will resigne my chaire to him. Com draw. *Enter A-*

nicetus they draw.

Tis I that am your King.

Montanus.

I shall beleeve
That Fortune has her eyes.

Britannicus

In getting Crownes
Nero, thy fortune is too good for mine.

Nero.

I know none envy mee.

Brit.

ACTUS PRIMUS.

Britannicus.

No envy can

Redresse my wrongs.

I will beginne with *Otho*.

I command thee send by *Amicus*

Some trusty token that immediately

May fetch *Poppaea* hither to the banquet.

Otho.

It shall bee done, this ring will fetch her hither,

Exit Amicus.

I ever thought 'twould come to this,

Petrinus.

Thy plot

Of bringing *Affie* in, I see has fail'd.

Otho.

I care not much; he would at last have scene her.

Nero.

Thou wilt not frowne my *Affie*, though thou see

Another beauty here.

Affie.

No royall *Cesar*,

Nor shall you heare mee envious, or detracting,

Although I know *Poppaea* is a Lady

Whose beauty does as farre excell poore *Affie*

As *Cynthia* does the lesser starres, or *Venus*

The other Sea-nymphs.

Nero.

Freely spoke, faire *Affie*.

Affie.

Here you shall finde the saying does not hold

That women are detractors from each other.

Nero.

Meane time begin a health.

MONTANUS.

So please it *Cesar*

To great *Augusta*, *Agrippina's* health.

D

Nero.

AGRIPPINA.

Nero.

Go round. And now *Petrinus*
I come to thee, I doo command thee write
A Satyre presently against those pleasures
Thou didst so lately prayse, against th' attire,
And costly diet of this notorious age.
This is thy Taske.

Petrinus.

Must obey the King :
And now's the fittest time for such a satyre.
I never finde my vertue of that strength
As to condemne good Victuals, but upon
A well fill'd stomacke.

Nero.

Give him wine to heighten't.

Petrinus.

I writ already a Satirick Poem
In a grave angry way, where I complaine
Of Romes excesse, corruption, luxury,
Of the present government, and twixt
Cæsar, and Pompey caus'd a civill warre.
And heere my castigations.

Now all the world victorious Rome had wonne
All lands, all Seas, the morne and evening Sunne,
Nor was content; the Ocean's furrow'd ore
With armed ships; if any farre-hid shore,
Whence there were, whence burnish'd gold was brought
Was their foe: by impious warre they sought
(as fittes so) for wealth, old known delight
They scorne, and Vulgar bare-worne pleasure slight.
Pearles in th' Assirian lakes the souldiers love.
Bright polish'd earth in hew with purple strowe.
Indica marble brings the Scythian yeilds
The early fleece, the Arabs spoile their fields,
We see more ruine yet, and greater wounds
Of injur'd peace, the Mauritanian grownds

And

A G R I P P I N A.

„ And Libyan Ammon's farthest woods, to get
 „ Wilde beasts are search'd whose teeth a price must set
 „ Upon their death, fierce Tigers fetch'd from farre,
 „ And stalking stately on the Theater
 „ Are fed with humane slaughter to delight
 „ The peoples eyes: after the persian rite
 „ (Alas I shame to speake it, and display
 „ The ruine-threatening fates) they cut away
 „ Manhood from growth spoil'd youths, for Venerie
 „ Softning their nature, to keepe backe thereby
 „ In spite of time, their age, her selfe in kinde
 „ Abused nature seeks, but cannot finde.
 „ They dote on Catamites, weake bending hammes,
 „ Unerv'd bodyes, and a thousand names
 „ Of new attires, loose haire of men, in whom
 „ All man is lost! lo slaves from Affrick come,
 „ Rich Citron boards, bright purple, which to view
 „ Cousening the senses beare a gold like hew.
 „ A wanton traine, in wine and surffets drown'd
 „ The far fetch'd table do encompassse round.
 „ The wealth that all the spacious world contains
 „ By lawlesse armes the rotting souldier gaines,
 „ Their gluttony grows witty; guilt-heads caught
 „ At Sea, alive are to their tables brought.

Nero.

No more, my furious Saryrist, thou hast chid
The times sufficiently.

Petrinus.

If you bee pleas'd
I have obey'd.

Nero.

Well, I perceive *Petrinus*
A man may write a Satyre, and yet bee
No *Scaurus*, *Curius*, or *Fabritius*.

Petrinus.

A Saryrist should bee the contrary,

ADRIANA.

And know these vices, which hee meanes to use.

Nero.

Brother *Britannicus* thy taske is next,
Stand up and sing a song.

Britannicus.

Give mee some time:

I cannot doo't extempore, what subject?

Nero.

Choose that your selfe.

Britannicus.

Then give me leave to sing

mine owne misfortunes, how I came to loose
the Roman scepter.

Nero.

How! that will not fit

A feast of mirth.

Britannicus.

No, let them laugh that winne

Patronus.

A good smart youth.

Nero.

This must not bee endur'd,

must bee freed from this continuall seare:

then bee excus'd, be merry Gentlemen,

wonder *Anicetus* staves so long.

Enter ANICETUS with POPPEA.

But see they come, is this *Poppea*, *Oiba*.

Oiba.

'Tis this great *Cesar*.

Nero.

Wonder of her sex!

Sight paragon of *Rome*! all beautyes yet

that I have seene, have been but foiles to let

A greater lustre on this starre of light.

Oiba.

His eys are fixt; his changing looks do speake

A depth

AGRIPPINA.

A depth of passion, or my jealous fears.
Daze mine eyes too much.

Petronius.

Tis so; shee's lost.
If ever Lady were a tennis ball
Tis this, shee's bandy'd so from one to tother.

Nero.

Must then another reap the envy'd fruit
Of my injustice? must *Poppaea* bee
My crime, that took her from her other Lord,
To be his pleasure?

Orho.

Is great *Cæsar* sad!

Nero.

No *Orho*, still shee shewes more faire and faire.
I cannot check my love; sit fairest Lady.
And with your lustre grace our feast. I see
Thou art a most incomparable judge
In beauty, *Orho*, and were I to choole
A wife againe, I'd trust no eye but thine.

Orho.

Would I might serve you Sr. in any thing.

Nero.

But tell mee thy opinion in one question.
Which dost thou thinke the noblest in a Prince,
If hee would use his power, and do an act
That may bee thought unjust, to do't for frendship,
Or satisfaction of his owne delight.

Orho.

Sr. had you made the case a private man's
(For the delights of Princes, as themselves,
Wee must count sacred) I could soone resolve in.

Nero.

Let it bee so for tis the same in justice.

Orho.

I thinke it noblest then to do't for frendship.

AGRIPPINA.

For friendship ever was held honorable,
But satisfaction of our own delights
A thing of weakenesse rather then of honour,

Petronius.

I see his drift.

Nero.

Augustus Cæsar then
And I by power have done the selfe same act.
But in the cause I have excell'd *Augustus*,
For hee to satisfie his own hot love
From *Claudius Nero* tooke faire *Livia*.
I from *Crispinus* took a brighter beauty
To shew my selfe no lover: but a friend.
Doo not mistake mee *Otho*, and suppose
I do repente the favour I have done
I know tis well bestow'd.

Otho.

'Twas such a favour
That I confesse, great *Cæsar*, as no tongue
Can bee enough expresseive; so tis hard
To find a heart that's large enough to pay
Sufficient thanks in thought, but pious men
Have still acknowledg'd that no thanks of ours
Can equalize the bounty of the Gods.
And Princes are like them, should I thinke lesse
I should both wrong the giver, and the gift.

Nero.

In valuing her aright thou shew'st thy selfe
As wise as just. I wish thee joy of her.
But fairest Lady, since it was so late
Before you grac'd our feast, I cannot thinke
That I have entertain'd you yet at all.
The scene shall therefore change, another roome
Shall bid *Peppa* welcome to the Court.

Exeunt.

Fitt.

AGRIPPINA.

VITELLIVS, POLLIO.

Vitellius.

Yet *Cesar* and his mother well agree.

Pollio.

The Gods continue it, but *Vitellius*,
I feare the sequell. *Agrippinaes* fierce
And haughty disposition will too much
Provoke her sonne 'tisthought; and hee too forward
To throw all nature off.

Vitellius.

I thinke so too.

And therefore I could wish that *Agrippina*
Would go a gentler way, shee must not fild
Too much upon her merits, though wee know
Twas shee that put the scepter in his hand.
For vicious natures, where they once begin
To take distast, and purpose no requitall,
The greater debt they owe, the more they hate

Pollio.

Besides shee 'll find it harder far to worke
Her ends upon a sonne then twas to rule
A doating husband.

Pollio.

Time will shew it all,
And we ere long shall know which way to leane.

BURRUS, SENECA.

Burrus.

Will *Agrippina* sit to day with *Cesar*
On his Tribunall, to give audience
To those Armenian Embassadors?

Seneca.

There is no doubt shee would; but I have spoil'd
That state I hope, for I have counsell'd *Nero*.
That if shee come, hee shall arise and meet her,
As if he did it in respect, and duty

D 4

Defer

AGRIPPINA.

Deferring th' audience of th' Embassador,
I hope thee will not understand our drift.

Burrhus.

Pray heaven thee do not, for you know her fiercenesse.

Seneca.

It would bee *Romes* disgrace, the *Senates* shame
And my great crime if the Embassadors
That come to plead their countryes cause at *Rome*,
Should see a woman perching up with *Cæsar*
Into the chaire to give them audience.
And sit commanding ore the Roman ensignes:
Twas not the custome of our Ancestors
To see such sights.

Burrhus.

True *Lucius Seneca*,
Our Ancestours had no such kinde of women,
Shee in her heart's a man, and you mistake
If you esteem her onely *Cæsar's* mother;
She his Colleague, and partner in the Empire
Or more then so.

Seneca.

I am not so ingratefull
To hate the woman, since I know it was
Her favour, that repeald my banishment.
But I dislike these things, that forreigne States
In such unseemly carriage should behold
The shame of *Rome*, and would shee keepe a temper
In the quality of her sex and place,
I should admire the bravery of her minde.

Xiphilin.

Enter *NERO, VITELLIVS, POLDIO,*

NERO, takes his state, after them

the Embassadors.

Embassadors.

Long live great *Nero Cæsar*, the cheefe care

Of

A G R I P P I N A.

Of heaven, and highest Souveraigne of the Earth,
 The Princes of *Armenia*, *Volageses*
 And *Tiridates* greet your Majesty
 By us, and do congratulate the honor,
 Which since divinest *Claudius* left the earth
 To make a God in heaven, is fall'n on you.
 And to your high Tribunall doe referre
 The controverſie that is now betwixt them.

Nero.

Enter Agrippina.

My mother's come, deſerth' Embaſſadors
 As twas appointed *Seneca*.

Seneca.

I will.

Nero.

Haile deareſt mother.

Agrippina.

Wherefore riſes *Cæſar*
 From his Tribunall when affaires of ſtate
 Are brought before him?

Nero.

No reſpect can bee
 Too much for mee to give great *Agrippina*.

Agrippina.

Excuse mee, *Cæſar*, if it bee reſpect,
 Tis now unreaſonable, take your ſeat,
 I'll ſit with you my ſelfe, and here th' affaires
 Of theſe Armenian Embaſſadors.

Nero.

Wee have deferred the buſineſſe a while,
 And thought upon a ſitter time to heare it.

Agrippina.

If you ariſe becauſe the audience
 Is ended or deſerr'd upon juſt reaſons,
 Tis not reſpect to mee that made you riſe,
 As you alldg'd at firſt, but I have found it,
 The reaſon that deſerr'd this audience

D 5

Was

AGRIPPINA.

Was *Agrippinaes* coming.

Barbula.

This I fear'd.

Seneca.

'Twas carry'd ill of *Cæsar* at the first.

Agrippina.

I see thou blushest, *Nero*, and may'st justly,

To call that reverence, which was affront,

Was a dissembling not befitting *Cæsar*.

And to affront a mother so deserving

Was not the duty that befitted *Nero*.

Nero.

Can nearest *Agrippina*, thinke her *Nero*.

Will ever doo an act that may bee judg'd

Affront to her

Agrippina.

This was thou know'st it *Nero*.

And so does thy adviser *Seneca*

From him it came, no other Senator

Durst to have counsell'd my disgrace but hee

Seneca.

Never will *Seneca*, so much obleidg'd

To *Agrippinaes* royall favour, with

Or counsell her disgrace.

Agrippina.

Oh *Seneca*.

Philosophy nere taught ingratitude.

If you had thought the place unfit for mee,

You might have told mee privatly before,

Not us'd this tricke which how so ere it hold

In *Stoicisme*, I'm sure is nought in state.

Vittellius.

Seece payes him home.

Pallas.

Her spirit cannot brooke

The least appearance of an injury.

Agrippina

A G R I P P I N A.

Agrippina.

Cesar, I'll leave thee now, nor shall my presence
Bee any hinderance to thy state affaires.

Nero.

I'll go a long with you.

Agrippina.

For *Seneca*

I'll shortly teach him new Philosophy.

Exit.

manent. BURRHUS, SENECA.

Seneca.

Shee's full of anger; but it moves not mee,
Since what I did was just, and for the honour
Of *Rome* and *Cesar*, honest actions
Will bee enough protection to them selves.

Burhus.

Take the best courtes to prevent her fury.

Seneca.

Ah noble *Burhus*, it must bee hereafter
Our greatest care to curb that womans pride,
And what wee can remove her from all rule
And government of state, for *Agrippina*
Is of too hot and fierce disposition.

Burhus.

What should wee doo? twere pitty to incense
Her sonne against her.

Seneca.

The Gods forbid that wee
Should strive to make the Prince unnaturall.
But to prevent this inconvenience
I will perswade young *Cesar* not with purpose
To wrong his mother, somewhat to abate
Her dangerous greatnesse, to remove from her
Part of her guard of German souldiers,
And to displace her wicked counsellour
That insolent and Lordly freedman *Pallas*.

Burhus.

Barbatus.

You need not use perfumptions to your Pupill
(The Gods for iustitie will amide)
To stand against his mother, I much feare
Shee will too quickly hate her, for no reason
To stay belonging; but because shee growes
Imperious over him, and strives to curbe
His lust and riots, those, those *Seneca*
Lusts are seedes of future tyranny
And for his love (as if the fates decreed
To make his passions all preposterous)
His vertuous wife noble *Octavia*
The only instance in this wicked age
Of women great and good, is loath'd by him.

Seneca.

That most afflicts mee: could wee finde a cure
For that disease, all other maladies
A ripper age will in some part redresse,
And I will strive to change them by degrees,
And get him to forsake his loose associates.
But let us first endeavour to remove
Farre *Agrippina* from all rule of state.

Barbatus.

I joyne with you, and use my best endeavours.

Exeunt.

NERO.

Nero.

Shall I that am an Emperor, bee check'd,
Control'd and baffled in my Pallace thus?
I will remove this mother farre from mee,
And give command to *Barbatus* to provide
That house, that was *Antonias* for her.
The Pallace shall bee free to my delights,
I make no doubt but that the people know,
And hate her pride, and will the lesse repine
At what I do against her, I have told her

For

AGRIPPINA.

(For thee provok'd mee past all patience)
Part of my minde already, thee shall mee
Repentance too late the fiercenesse thee has shew'd

Exit.

AGRIPPINA.

Agrippina.

Ingratefull *Nero*, is thy mothers power
So soone offensive growne? canst thou so soone
Cast off all filiall duties, and forget
What I deserve from thee? wouldst thou deprive
Mee of all power that gave all power to thee?
Did I so wickedly for thee procure
The height of human state, that thou shouldst take
All state from mee with greater wickednesse?
Oh wronged *Claudius*, this sad punishment
My bloody treason, and ingratitude
To thy offended *Manes* justly payes.
By the most loving, and most injur'd Lord,
The worst of wives was more belov'd then now
The best of mothers by a wicked Sonne.
I'le make him know what hand it was that rais'd
His fortunes to this height; but wherefore weeps

Enter Octavia.

My deare *Octavia*?

Octavia.

What accursed fate
Pursues the wofull *Claudius* family?

Agrippina.

Destre daughter speake thy grieve.

Octavia.

Was I bestow'd,
Or rather lost in marriage, to advance
Upon my brother's ruine, *Nero's* state
To bee by him despys'd, hated and made
A base fied-womans slave?

Agrippina.

AGRIPPINA.

What freed woman?

Agrippina.

Xiphilin.

Octavia.

Thy Nero's concubine my mistress
Thou darest within the palace to contest
To revile *Octavia*.

Agrippina.

She darest not,
Nor shall she doo't, I'll flir the strumpets nose,
If she darespeake gainst thee.

Octavia.

You cannot mother.

Nero delights in none but her, his soule
In *Agrippina* lives; on her he does bestow
That love, that's due to mee; But mee hee loaths;
Oh dismall love, Oh small marriage!

Agrippina.

Take comfort sweete *Octavia*, I'll redresse
Thy wrongs, or venture mine owne fall with thee.

Enter Nero.

Nero.

You have complain'd I see, *Octavia*.
Is there a chiding toward?

Agrippina

Has thy guilt,
And th' unkinde wrongs thou hast already done
Thou thankfull *Nero*, to thy vertuous wife

Xiphilin.

Arr'd thee with such an impudence, that now
Thou canst prevent her just accusing thus?

Nero.

How's this?

Agrippina.

Mee thinkes although thou hadst no sparke
Of goodnesse left thee, yet in Policy

Thou

AGRIPPINA.

Thou shouldst not dare maintain a base borne strumpet
Against thy lawfull wife great *Claudius* daughter.

Nero.

Meethinks in policy you might remember
You speake to *Cesar*, not a childe.

Agrippina.

Tis true,
Thou hast forgot the duty of a childe.

Nero.

I will bee better known; if I bee Crost
In my delights, I will bee bold to crosse
You in your pleasures too

Agrippina.

Oh heavens, what pleasures
What joyes or studies have I ever had
But to preferre thee *Nero*? are my cares
And all my labours thus required now?
Let not too vaine and foolish confidence
Of what thou art, make thee presume to wrong
Thy mother and thy wife; or thou shalt know
The Empires lawfull heire is yet alive.

The wrong'd *Britannicus* is growing up
To take his right, and to revenge the wrongs
Which hee and all his family sustaine
I'll go my selfe to the *Prætorian Campe*,
And plead his cause before the Souldiers.
There let one-handed *Barrius*, and that base
Unthankfull exile *Seneca*, appeare
Against the daughter of *Germanicus*.

Nero.

Yes plead the cause of young *Britannicus*;
And when y' have done, provide an advocate
To plead your own.

Exit Nero.

Agrippina.

Gone so abruptly from us!

Slight

AGRIPPINA.

Alas! mine anger for

Otho is.

Madam I feare

You took too harsh a way; his looks were wild
And full of rage; my fall misgiving soule
Tels mee some mischief's working in his thoughts.

Agrippina.

Feare not, *Otho*, we'll take the best

And surest courtes to prevent the ill

That may ensue: and if mature advice

And counsell cannot bridle him, we'll use

Another meane to curbe his insolence:

I have already by my heauy made

Most of the Tribunes and Centurions.

My guards are strong, and shall bee vigilant

Over the safety of *Britannicus*,

As mine own person, there's no open act

Of mischief can be on the fustine wrought.

Otho is.

The Gods I hope will guard our innocence.

Exeunt.

Nero solus.

Nero

My feares have been too slow, and was high time

That *Agrippina's* thundering drums had wak'd

My sleeping mischeefes; which shall now no more

Study disguises, but appeare in bold

And open acts with *Cassius* stampen upon,

Forleffe of vulgar whispering malouyses.

When thy death, *Britannicus*, a price

More lesse then *Rome's* imperiall wreath is set.

The deede, when done, will privilege it selfe,

And make the power of *Nero* strong enough

To waite out his misdeede, who dare revenge

Or blame th' offence that frees mee from a rivall?

But I shall leave a worfe, and nearer farr

Behinde,

AGRIPPINA.

Behinde, my mother *Agrippina* lives; shee lives my rivall, nay my partner still,
 Nay more then that my *Queene* and *Governesse*.
 I am no Prince, no man, nothing at all
 While *Agrippina* lives, must shee then live
 To make mee nothing? must the name of mother
 Outweigh a scepter? could the name of husband
 Protect her *Claudius*? no; her owne example
 Shall teach mee state: but first *Britannicus*
 Must bee remov'd, his death assures my state,
 And makes mee able to contest with her.
 That gentle poison, which *Loppha* gave him,
 If poison twere, whilest wee did vainely feare
 The peoples talke, has kept my feares alive.
 Where is this hagge?

Enter Locusta.

Locusta.

Cesar.

Nero.

Witch.

beats her.

Feind, fury, divell.

Locusta.

Mercy, meroy, Cesar.

Nero.

I'll hew thy curst carcasse into atomes,
 Thou gav'st *Britannicus* an antidote
 In stead of poyson.

Locusta.

Twas agende poyson,
 And such as you commanded mee to make;
 Hold *Cesar* hold; I will redeeme all yet.

Nero.

Do it or dy, make mee a poyson sutor,
 A quicke and speeding one.

Locusta.

It shall bee done.

No

AGRIPPINA.

No sooner tasted, but I shall destroy.

I'll see the tryall of it, and reward
Thy service well; but if *Britannicus*
Outlive this day, this day shall bee thy last.

Exeunt

ACTUS V. SCENA. I.

**BURRUS, VITELLIUS, ANNE-
GETUS, Soldiers**

Burrus.

It is the will of, *Cæsar*, soldiers
You must bee all discharg'd from guarding her.
But you shall have allowance, and thus much
I'll promise for your comforts, you shall bee
The next that are ascrib'd into the list
Of the *Prætorian* campe.

Soldiers.

Thanks noble *Burrus*.

Burrus.

Go *Anicetus* give command that straight
That house, which was *Antonius* bee prepar'd
For *Agrippina*, and her family.
Cæsar will have the Palace to himselfe.

Vitellius.

Does *Agrippina* know't?

Burrus.

AGRIPPINA.

Barbus.

Not yet I think.

Vitellius.

Is there displeasure then 'twixt her and *Caesar*?

Barbus.

I know not. you'll excuse my haste, my Lord
I must take leave.

exit Barbus.

Vitellius.

I like not these new turns.

I came to visit her: but now I'll spare

My haile this morne. whither so fast my Lord?

Pollia.

To visit *Agrippina*.

Vitellius.

Stay, I'll tell you.

There is some difference twixt her and *Caesar*.

Her guards are take away. I parted now

From *Barbus*, who discharg'd them. seee her selfe

Shall be remov'd from the Imperiall palace.

Pollia.

I like not that; I'll spare my visit then.

PETRONIUS, MONTANUS.

Montanus.

Otho will loose his wife then.

Petronius.

Yes, no doubt;

And I believe must leave the City too.

Nero's extremely fir'd, and hee will have her

Alone; poore *Otho* must not rivall *Caesar*

Nor indeed is it fitting that the husband

Should make th' adulterer a cuckold.

Montanus.

Do'st thou beleeeve, *Petronius*, that this change

Pleases *Poppaea*?

Petronius.

CORUPPINA.

Petronius.

Yes, I warrant her.
Shee thinks her beauty never could have done her
A greater service.

Montanus.

But shee seem'd to love
Extremely.

Petronius.

I confesse *Montanus*
I thinke her apperit stood well to *Orbe*;
For it is a fassall of a winning earring
And curious feature; but shee has enjoy'd him
Sometime already, and that passion
Which you call love, does move in a degree
So low, and feeble, it is soone swallow'd up
In the deepe torrent of ambition.
Poppa's proud; nor can the breast of hers
Harbour a love so strong, but it must yeeld
To pride her quality predominant.

Montanus.

What can shee bee but *Nero's* concubine?
I see not what high honour lyes in that.

Petronius.

You cannot tell what shee may bee in time.

Montanus.

Shee cannot bee *Augusta*; that high name
Octavia, while shee lives, will keep, hee dares not
Forlake that wife (how e're hee do affect her)
To whom hee may bee sayd to owe the Empire.

Petronius.

For mine own part, I know not how will go.
But I dare swear *Poppa* e're this time
Has ask'd and heard what the *Children* say
About her fortunes: our fine dames of *Rome*
Must still bee tampering with that kinde of castill.
Their dogs, their monkeys, and themselves do nothing
Without

AGRIPPINA.

Without th' aduile of such a cunning man,
Hast thou scene *Othobal* lately?

Mammius.

Yes to day:

Petronius.

How does hee looke upon the businesse?

Montanus.

Faith somewhat sad; but *Cesar* seemes to use him
So wouderfull kindly that he cannot thinke
Hee's wrong'd at all.

Petronius.

Prithee let's finde him out.

PALLAS *solus.*

Pallas.

No longer steward of th' Imperiall house!
Are greatest benefis so soone forgot
By wicked Princes? tis and ever was
The fate of Courts, Monarchs unjustly hate
Acknowledgment: what power, what honor now
Does *Nero*, hold but what hee owes to mee?
My merit, nay my wickednesse, which did
To him encrease the merit for this heart
Has bled the more for my ingratitude
To my best master *Claudius*, his sad wrongs
Another now revenges! oh *Narcissus*,
Perchance the conquest that I got ore thee,
When wee two strove about the suceessor
To *Claudius Caesar*, will hereafter prove
More fatall to the conqueror, then him
That lost the day, thou in *Campania*
Diddst happily, though hunted to thy death
By us; and carry'dst to thy grave the honor
Of ayding the just side, oh Royall Emperesse,

Enter Agrippina.

I feare our care to rise unthankfull *Nero*
Will prove at last our own destruction.

My

AGRIPPINA.

My places losse I weigh not, but for feare
It prove a step to your dishonour, Madam.

Agrippina.

'Tis for my sake that thou hast lost it, *Pallas*,
With mee my friends are hated. Oh sad fate
That followes impious actions! well perchance
And happily might I have liv'd if wrong'd
Britannicus had reign'd! Oh would the losse
Of this unworthy life could yet procure
That injur'd Prince his due.

Pallas.

Can fortune turne
The course of things so strangely, that you Madam,
The Prince his mother and his raiser too
Should with the others reigne

Agrippina.

It can, it can.

This is the power and justice of the Gods,
That when wee thinke our selves most safe in ill,
Can frustrate all our confidence, and make
That power, which seem'd to bee our prop, to bee
Our onely cause of ruine, wee are children,
Whose makes us children, like to them, wee cry
For Knives to hurt our selves with, and the Gods
To punish us oft grant what wee desire.

An horse brought in OCTAVIA.

following.

Pall. What dolefull noise is this?

Agrippina

Ay mee, I feare.

Octavia.

In dismall day! Oh wretched family!
Back bright *Phaëus* to the Easterne shore,
Shade thy head; thou hast at Rome beheld
A more black then ere *Myænzæ* saw.
Dearest brother, sweet *Britannicus*.

Agrip-

AGRIPPINA.

Agrippina.
Britannicus,

Offavia.
Murder'd *Britannicus*,
Poison'd at *Nero's* table.

Agrippina
Breake my heart

The greatest woe, that could befall, is come.
Forgive mee, gentle Soule, twas I that gave
That viper life, and rule to ruin thee.
Thou need'st not curle mee; the impiety
Of him that kill'd thee, will revenge thy death.

Pallas
Faile hope of *Rome*, sweet flower untimely cropt,
What parentation shall sad *Pallas* make
To appease thy wronged ghost, and expiate
My foule offences? to the King and Queene
Of fable night I'll build two grasseie altars,
And yeerely there, if any yeeres at all
I have to live, with sad libations
Invoke the manes of *Britannicus*,
Thou from the groves of faire Elysium
For ever wail'd for ever honour'd Prince,
Deigne to accept my humble sacrifice.
Or if those rights bee too too meane for thee,
Perchance the Genius of afflicted *Rome*
Shall weep hereafter ore thy grave, and wail
Th' untimely death of her *Britannicus*.

Agrippina.
Gentle to thee let earth and water prove.

Exit Offavia.
This wofull murder of *Britannicus*.

Ex. sumus.
Bodes ill to mee, and my presaging soule
Is fill'd with ghastly feares, Ah *Pallas*, *Pallas*,
This is the entrance into Paricide,

And

AGRIPPINA.

And but the Prologue to a mothers death.

Pallas.

Would I could speake to your distresse and feares
A true and reall comfort, such a one
As might not flatter your estate, and make
You weaker then before, by taking from you
All study of prevention.

Servant.

Servant.

Cæsar. Madam,
Is come to visit you.

Agrippina.

Pallas. farewell.

Enter Nero.

Nero.

What weeping Madam? what unworthy cause
Dares force a teare from greater *Augustus* eye
While *Nerva* lives? if 't bee my brother's death,
That caus'd this sorrow, I could joyne in teares
I had not that tragedy already rob'd
Mine eyes of moisture,

Agrippina.

This hypocrisie
Makes mee lesse trust his nature then before.

Nero.

The Gods have rob'd men of one comfort now
The fellowship of sweet *Britannicus*,
That all my piety may bee confin'd
To you, deare mother, you containe alone
Within a Parents sacred name, all stiles
Of kindred now, all bonds of pious love.
Feare not a change in mee.

Agrippina.

I do not *Cæsar*.

Nero.

Your feast is celebrat now.

Agrippina.
Five

AGRI P P I N A.

Nero.

Minervaes feast is celebrated now
Five dayes at Baia thither you shall go
And feast with mee deare mother, there forget
All jealous feares, and you shall never more
Complaine of *Nero*. If the stratagem
Of *Anicetus* prosper, her complaint
Shall be to *Pluto*, and the Ghosts below.

Xiphilin.

Aside.

Exeunt.

O T H O with his Commission.

Otho.

The Government of *Lusitania*.
By *Nero's* grace and favor is bestow'd
On mee ! Oh glorious name of banishment!
Yet welcome now, since faire *Poppæa's* lost.
I thanke thee, *Nero*, thou provid'st a brave
And honourable cure for that sad wound
Thou hast inflicted on my love-sicke Soule.
How great a torture had it been to mee
To live in *Rome* divorc'd from her, and see
That beauty folded in another's armes!
Hence wanton thoughts; fond love for ever vanish,
Collect my soule what ere thou hast within thee
Of Roman left, and answer to the call
Bright honour makes, some favourable God
Pitying the lusts and riots of a youth
So much mislead, has sent this seeming losse
To wake me from so base a lethargy.
Employ'd in forreigne action, I shall live
Free from rh' infectious vices of this Court,
And farre from seeing the abhorr'd effects
Of future tyranny, which needs must breake
From *Nero's* vicious nature. At my birth
The Augures promis'd high and glorious hopes.
This is the way to bring them. Spaine shall find
Another *Otho* then was sent from *Rome*.
Poppæa promis'd here to meete, and take

AGRIPPINA.

Her last leave of mee. why should I againe
Renue my passion by the sight of her?
But 'tis but one poore look. and so farewell.

Enter SELEUCUS.

Seleucus.

Haile *Marcus Ottho* Emperour of Rome,
On whom that shall bee.

Otho.

Ha!

Seleucus.

It is thy fate,
Which shall not bee prevented.

Otho.

Tell mee father

(For your predictions ever have been true)
Shall I behold *Poppaeas* face againe,
When I have left the City?

Seleucus.

Never more.

Exit Seleucus.

Otho.

Never! a heavy doome yet I in lier
Of her shall gaine the Empire of the world.
Juno will heale the wounds that *Venus* gives.

Enter POPPÆA.

See, there she comes; her beauty waxes still,
Or else the sad conceit of never more
Seeing that face, makes it appeare more faire.
How dull the edge of Honour grows already!
Here could I stay, and like the Trojan Prince
Lockt in faire *Diodes* armes forget for ever
Th' Italian land, and all my future fame:
Him *Jove* admonish'd to depart from thence.
Meete the command of *Cæsar* forces hence,
And leaves no power in my election.
Farewell *Poppæa*.

AGRIPPINA.

Poppaea.

Oh hard fate in love
Is mine, whose joyes were never lasting yet.
Speake not so loone that killing word farewell.

Otho.

What gaine, alas, can one small minute bee?
Or if twere gaine to mee, to the *Poppaea*
Twere losse to keepe thee from thy *Cæsars* sight.
Hee is thy servant, whom the world obeyes.

Poppaea.

Ah *Otho*, love can witnesse that this Fortune
Was never sought by mee.

Otho.

Thou wert too great
A treasure for a privat man to keep.
No; live still happy with thy *Cæsar* here
And grant mee one request; if of that love
Which once wee vow'd so deare, there yet remains
So small a part as may deserve the name
Of comon frendship, use thy power with *Cæsar*
My government may be continu'd long.

Poppaea.

Rather let mee intreate the contrary,
And keepe thee here at *Rome*.

Otho.

It must not bee.
Never while *Nero* lives, and lives with thee.
It must bee love no more, but frendship now
Twixt us *Poppaea*, which may still bee kept
In absence by good wishes, and without
Those nearer comforts which fond love requires.
But who shall teach mee to forget that sweet
Delicious lesson which loves schoole did teach,
When thy admired beauty was the booke,
And I a Scholler too too forward then?
Oh would great *Cæsars* power to cure my wound,

A G R I P P I N A.

Could but bestow so privative a good
As losse of memory. but that, alas,
Were too unjust a cure, and I could wish
Rather to suffer still then quite forget
That I was once *Poppæes* envi'd love.
I'll rather strive to solace my sick soul
With contemplation of past happinesse,
And by recounting ore our former joyes
Deceive those houres of sorrow I must passe.

Pop. And I for comfort of our absent love
Will cherriish hopes that wee shall meet againe.

Oth. No, thinke mee dead, bright love, and I'll enforce
My imagination to beleave that thou
Translated by some amorous Deity
Hast left the earth to beautify the sky,
And turne Astronomer in love, to finde
Thy figure out among those radiant lights
Which *Joves* transformed Paramours have made.
Mongst those I'll seeke for faire *Poppæes* starre,
And swear I see it, rather then beleave
Thou liv'st on earth debarr'd from *Otho's* sight.

I must begin to part, I see; for thou
In modesty art loath to chide mee hence,
And bid mee quit the place. Farewell *Poppæa*.
Such height of happinesse mayst thou enjoy
As *Cæsars* constant love can bring to thee.

Pop. As much good for tune follow *Otho* still
Tis power that parts us, all the Gods can tell *Exit Otho*
How well I love thee *Otho*. but those Gods,
That have ordain'd another fate for mee
Must bee obey'd yet *Nero* must bee wrought
With cunning to my ends, or else my fortune
Is low and poore, my title nought at all.
Tis not the love of *Cæsar*, but the honour,
And that high title which attends his love
That is *Poppæes* aime, *Ostavia*

Debarres

AGRIPPINA.

Debarres mee yet from that, and *Agrippina*
Is fierce, and keeps her sonne in Pupillage.

Enter *NERO*.

Nero.

Now faire *Poppæa*, thou art mine alone;
Otho's remov'd, embrace the happy change
That fortune brings thee, thou hast found instead
Of him, a *Cæsar*, who besides his state
Has brought a heart as true to thee, and love
As strong and fervent as poore *Otho's* was
Thou wert before a diamond conrily set,
A clouded starre. the Fates did pittie thee,
And would no longer let that beaurly
Ecclipsed in a private family
No seat but *Rome's* Imperiall throne, no sphere
But *Cæsars* armes were fit for these bright eyes
To shine in, and the subject world t'adore
Their lustre, like some constellation
New risen to amaze mortality.
Not *Rome* alone, but all the farthest shores
That *Peleus* silver-footed wife ere knew
Shall call *Poppæa* mistress.

Poppæa.

Those are honours
Cæsar, too high, too great for mee to hope.

Nero.

To hope, my love, they are thine owne already.

Poppæa.

Cæsar, thou know'st it cannot bee, and I
That might have liv'd content with *Otho's* love;
And there enjoy'd the honour'd name of wife,
Must in the Palace find a baser stile.

Nero.

Thou wrong'st my power, *Poppæa*, if thou thinke
I cannot give the highest stile to thee:
And if thou thinke I meane it not, thou wrong'st

AGRIPPINA.

My truest love

Poppaea.

Octavia is alive

No love of thine can beare *Augustus* state

But onely thee

Nero.

Shee shall bee soon remov'd

To make a roome for faire *Poppaeas* honour.

Nor will the *Senate* dare to grumble at it.

Poppaea.

Though all were silent else, fierce *Agrippina* *Xiphilix*

Would in that act controll thee, and thinke mee

To meane for *Cesars* wife, though I am sprung

(For I may speake a truth that *Rome* can witness)

From noble and triumphant Ancestors.

Nero.

There, love, thou strik'st upon the truest string.

That *Agrippina* was my greatest feare,

Though now shee is not; for I'll tell it thee,

If *Anicetus* stratagem have taken,

Ere this shee wanders on the *Strygian* shore.

Weary I was of her imperious pride,

And fear'd her cruell plots. How that succedes

Is now my greatest expectation.

Nor do I live till *Anicetus* come

And bring my safety in that womans death

Enter ANICETUS.

Poppaea.

See, *Anicetus* is return'd

Nero.

Speake man

What is my fate? thou carriest in thy voyce

The life and death of *Cesar*

Anicetus

Your command

Was done, great *Cesar*, but your mother scap'd

Nero.

A G R I P P I N A.

Nero.

Escap'd? how could it bee, but you were false,
And all conspir'd together to betray *Xiphilin*
My life in saving hers? how could shee scape?

Anicetus.

Wee chose the night to act it in; but night,
Prov'd not so black as night; the stars gave light,
No wind at all blew as wee lanch'd forth *Xiphilin*
Down in the Galley *Agrippina* lay,
And at her feet lay *Aceronia*
With joy discourfing of your curtesie,
And favour lately shew'd her, but when I
The watch-word gave, the covering of the place
Loaden with lead fell downe, and prest to death
Her servant *Gallus*. But when th' other part
By fortune stronger, broke not, nor the vessell
Was loos'd afunder, all beeing in amaze
The rowers straitway thought it best to weigh,
The galley at one side, and sinke her so
There *Aceronia* floating in the waves
Faining her selfe to beg the Emperesse, cry'd
Helpe, helpe the Prince his mother. But the rowers
With poles, and oares straight kill'd her as shee swamme,
But *Agrippina* in a silence caus'd
By policy or feare, swamme to the banke,
Having received but one wound, and there
Succour'd by little barkes, through *Lucrine* lake
To her owne house was carry'd at the last.

Nero.

Oh, I am lost and dead; I shall bee straight
Surpris'd and kill'd; shee'll arme her slaves, and stirre
The souldiers up, or to the Senate house
Complaine, and shew the wound shee has receiv'd
And tell the story there. What shall I doo?
Advise mee, my *Poppæa*, *Anicetus*,
But yet advise mee nothing but her death,

AGRIPPINA.

No other course is safe *Nero*. must dy
If *Agrippina*. live, call *Burrhus* to mee;
Send forth the souldiers to dispatch her straight.

Poppa

It is no action for a souldiers hand
Nor will the campe for brave *Germanicus*,
Her father's sake bee drawne to butcher her
Let *Anicetus*. finish the exploit
Hee has begunne.

Nero.

It must be so; go on
With thy religious act, good *Anicetus*.
Thou art oblig'd to finish it, or else
What thou hast done already, will procure
My ruine rather then security
Choofthee what aide thou wilt.

Anicetus

I have them ready.
Feare it not *Cesar*, *Agrippinas* dead.

Nero.

Oh comfortable voice! thou art the man
Thou only *Anicetus*, that bestow'st
The Empire upon *Nero*. to thy guilt
I will acknowledg it, and celebrate
This as my day of coronation.
What plot shall wee invent to hide the deede,
And putt'nt intent of murder upon her?
To bring you newes of her escape, I'll finde
A way to doo't, tis strange none yet come from her.
See *Agerinus* comes

Enter Agerinus.

Agerinus.

All health to *Cesar*
Augusta by the favour of the Gods
Has lately scap'd a strange and wonderfull
Danger at Sea.
Ani. *Cesar* when any of her servants come

What

AGRIPPINA.

What meanes this ponyard *Anicetus lets fall a ponyard*
 In *Cæsars* prefence, *Agerinus*? *behinde Agerinus.*
Nero.

Treason. *Ziphilin.*
 Shee sends to murder mee; dragge hence the slave,
 And torture him to death.

Agerinus.
 I am as free
 From guilt in this as innocence it selfe.

Nero.
 Hence with the villaine to his death, and thou
 Deare *Anicetus*, forward with thy plot. *Exeunt.*

AGRIPPINA, brought in by *Mneſter*,
 and *Seleucus*, shee ſits.

Agrippina.
 Leave mee alone; but bee not farre from mee. *Exeunt.*
 Who would rely upon the gratitude
 Of men? or trust the fruit of benefits,
 That now behold, or shall hereafter reade
 My wofull fortune? I, that have bestow'd
 What ere the world containes, to bee possesse
 By impious *Nero*, in reward, expect
 Nothing but bloody death twas too too true
 That strange deceitfull galley was a plot
 An impious engine made to murder mee,
 As by the fiercenesse of the slaves, my wound,
 And *Aceroniaes* death it did appeare.
 Can I expect that *Nero* should relent?
 Or that the tyrant in a brothers blood
 Embrew'd already, should not rather thinke
 No mischeife can bee safe till fully done?
 Oh had his thoughts beene good, had my escape
 Beene gratefull to him, all the house ere this
 With visitants, and clients had been fill'd
 To aske and see how *Cæsars* mother did
 Where now are all the hailes the bended knees,

Low

AGRIPPINA.

Low prostrate faces, and officious tongues,
That strove in honoring *Agrippina's* name?
Vanish'd alas, and nought but solitude,
Ill-boding silence, and neglect remaine
In this forsaken Palace. But too soone
Ay mee, I feare the approach of wilany.
What noise is that at doore! where are my servants?

Mneſter, Seleucus, Galla, Xenophon.

No answer made! are they departed too!

Then vanish all my hopes false world farewell

With all thy fading glories. But alas,

Whither from hence shall *Agrippina* fly?

What regions are there in the other world

But my injustice has already fill'd

With wronged Ghosts? there young *Silanus* wanders,

Lollia Paulina and great *Claudius*

My murdred Lord, yet those sad spirits perchance

Abhorring *Nero's* base ingratitude,

And glutted with revenge, will cease to hate

At last, and pity *Agrippina's* state.

Enter ANICETUS, CLOANITUS, and others.

Ay mee, is *Anicetus* come againe?

Then I am dead past hope, murder, helpe. help *Epilius*.

Anicetus.

You guesse our businesse right but tis in vaine

To call for helpe, your guards are farre enough.

Agrippina.

Oh hold your hands a while, heare mee but speake

Consider with your selves before you act

A deed so execrable as will stick

A lasting brand on your abhorred names.

This murder will be famous through the world.

All men will fly your hated company.

Like birds of night shall ye for ever hide

Your guilty heads; or, which is worse then that,

Nero himselfe, who did command the deeде,

As

AGRIPPINA.

(As you pretend) shall guerdon you with death,
And quit himsele by punishing of you.
O rather venter *Neros* frowne, and keepe
Your innocence.

Anicetus.

Can they bee innocent,
That disobey their Prince his will?

Agrippina

But sure
You did mistake the Prince. I am his mother.
Twas I that gave him birth; nay more, that put
Into his hand the scepter of the world.
Could hee command my death?

Anicetus

Wee did not stand
Examining the cause.

Agrippina.

Then strike this wombe
This tragicall, and ever curst wombe,
That to the ruine of mankinde brought forth
That monster *Nero*, here, here take revenge.
Here Justice bids you strike. let these sad wounds
Serve to appease the hatred of the earth
'Gainst *Agrippina* for dire *Nero's* birth.

Xiphilix.

Shee dyes.

FINIS.

